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THE

PROBLEM OF EVIL.

Translated from the French of

M. ERNEST NAVILLE,

Author of "La Vie Éternelle," "Le Père Céleste," "Maine de Biran, sa Vie et ses Pensées," etc.,

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PROFESSOR IN THE OHIO WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY, AND TRANSLATOR OF PRESSENSÉ'S "REIGN OF TERROR."

[THE ONLY AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION.]

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NOTE OF THE TRANSLATOR.

THE author of these Lectures, Mr. Ernest Naville, is becoming well known to the Christian world as one of the most wide-awake and eloquent defenders of evangelical religion. His writings on the life and doctrines of Maine de Biran have procured for him honorable recognition in contemporary philosophy; while his brilliant and charming books, *La Vie Eternelle* and *Le Père Céleste*, have made him a popular favorite throughout French Protestantism.

Of the character and worth of the present volume, I will attempt no analysis, but will simply adopt the words of M. de Pressensé in the *Revue Chrétienne* of August, 1869. After remarking that the book forms one branch of a "vast monument of apologetics, or, more properly speaking, a citadel of solid granite, well able to resist the assaults of contemporary infidelity," M. de Pressensé thus proceeds: "These lectures are none the less profound for being thrown into an animated popular form. The questions are looked squarely in the face, and the admirable clear-

ness of the expression is but a fit counterpart to the author's keen and comprehensive insight into the abstrusities of philosophy. Nothing is more false than to confound obscurity with profundity; that which is obscure is often vague and inexact. The haze which hovers over the landscape, though but an aërial vapor, is yet sufficient to disenchant the whole outlook. This discussion of the Problem of Evil grapples boldly with the central difficulty of religion and of theodicy in general. The eloquent orator frankly admits the difficulty; he places us face to face with that knot of our destiny which, as Pascal expresses it, was tied in the abyss of the Fall. He does not solve it with a sword-stroke by resorting to a dogmatic system; such a procedure has no validity save for those who are convinced already. His method is purely philosophical; he presents the Christian solution as he would present any other, asking only that it be examined with honesty and candor—without preconceived prejudice. The most interesting portion of this excellent book is that which treats of *solidarity*, that mysterious and real bond which unites all the children of humanity, and attaches them to a common source, as branches of the same trunk. But it is not possible to give an adequate idea of such a work in a brief notice."

With this high appreciation of the book I think

most readers will heartily coincide. It certainly has two very happy tendencies: to acquaint us more fully with the inmost depths of our own hearts, and to enable us better to understand and appreciate the great moral crises of history. Though dealing with the subject of Evil in its most naked and terrible manifestations, the impression produced by the book is the very opposite of sad and dispiriting. It so uniformly confronts the dusky and hideous figure of Evil that *is* with the auroral beauty of the Good that *ought to be*, that we are hardly conscious of gazing into a pandemonium of darkness and crime—we rather seem to be beholding in prophetic vision the transfigured forms of Truth and Virtue and Joy triumphing over the despairing and yielding hosts of Night.

On laying the book aside we are enabled to look upon humanity with more confidence and hope, and we are pretty sure to go to our daily toil with a more cheerful contentment, realizing, in a higher sense than Fichte meant it, that our existence is not vain and purposeless, but that we are each a real link in the endless chain of being, and that if we but faithfully fulfill the humble duty that falls to us individually, we are then actual co-workers with God, working for the good of all, as, in his plan, all *should* be working for the good of us.

As to the style of the work I need say but a word. As it was written expressly for the "people" it discards all metaphysical jargon, and presents the profoundest thoughts of philosophy in language so familiar and objective as to be within the easy grasp of the humblest reader.

I hope to have preserved in the translation some degree of the directness and transparency of the original. J. P. L.

DELAWARE, OHIO, *June*, 1870.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO THIS TRANSLATION.

THE volume which Mr. Lacroix here presents to the American public forms one part of a series of works, the general nature and object of which can be readily stated in a few words.

Toward the close of the last century a large number of minds, yielding to the spirit of the times, adopted the opinion that there exists between Christian faith and reason—between the Gospel and philosophy—a radical antagonism. This was especially the case with certain gifted French authors whose works exerted a great influence throughout the reading world. This same manner of thinking reappears in our own day under the name of Free Thought, a title that is often assumed by the enemies of the Gospel, as if to imply that he who makes a free use of his understanding must necessarily reject Christianity. Study and meditation have led me to a view the very opposite of this. Passing over the minor details, and fixing our attention upon the great essential features of religion, I am convinced that the demands of rea-

son when seriously weighed, and the solutions which Christianity gives to the great problems of life, will be found to be in perfect harmony. This belief is necessarily included in the faith of the Christian who thinks himself in possession of the truth, for it is impossible to admit that there can be a disagreement between truth, which is the light of the intelligence, and reason, which is the eye designed for perceiving that light. If we ever speak of reason as opposed to the truth it is only of a perverted reason, or, more properly, of a mind which has allowed its reason to become obscured.

But it is one thing to have faith in the harmony of reason and the Christian doctrines, and quite another thing scientifically to demonstrate this harmony. It is toward this demonstration that I wish to contribute the weight of my labors, taking advantage for this purpose of those philosophical studies in which I have been engaged for the past thirty years, and of which I have, from time to time, expounded the results to the auditors of the Faculty of Letters in Geneva. To determine with precision the problems raised by philosophy as they present themselves in the history of human thought; to state the various solutions that have been proposed; to examine these solutions with that perfect liberty without which there can be no true science; to show that the solutions

contained in the Gospel are the most satisfactory of all those which have been proposed to science; finally, to conclude that the Christian faith contains, on the one hand, the germ of the best of philosophies, as, in the order of social life, it contains the germ of the best of civilizations—such is the object which I have set before me in a series of works intended for a wider public than that of the schools and universities.

I began by a series of lectures entitled *La Vie Eternelle.* This was followed by a series entitled *Le Père Céleste.* The next fruit of my studies is the volume in the hands of the reader. It will be followed, should God grant me the necessary time and strength, by a series of discourses on Jesus of Nazareth.

These lectures on the Problem of Evil were delivered to the public, first of Geneva and afterward of Lausanne, during the winter of 1867–68, under the title of a *philosophical discussion.* As the audiences were large and of all classes, it became necessary to discard the terms and formulas of the schools, and to clothe the results of my studies in a style intelligible to all. But it was equally necessary, in order to preserve the philosophical character of the discussion, to grapple with the most obscure phases of the problem, and to avoid none of the difficulties.

I have, therefore, striven to throw my thoughts into a pleasing literary form, without, however, sacrificing the requirements of a rigorous discussion.

At my express request the auditors proposed to me, during the process of the delivery of the lectures, various questions and objections. At the close of the series I devoted a special hour to the discussion of the points thus proposed. In preparing my lectures for the press I have taken advantage of these queries and objections to recast and improve as far as possible the work which I am now enabled, thanks to the esteemed labor of Mr. Lacroix, to commend to the favor of the public of America and England.

ERNEST NAVILLE.

GENEVA, *March* 1, 1870.

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THE

PROBLEM OF EVIL.

LECTURE I.

THE GOOD.

THERE is need neither of much art nor of many words to impress you with the importance of the subject which has called us together. The Problem of Evil! Who of you has not, time and again, proposed it to himself. Looking abroad over the face of society, how much discontent is observable—how many complaints of political oppression and cruel revolutions! of excessive luxury on the one hand, and squalid poverty on the other! The history of nations is but too often a tissue of crimes and a web of misfortunes. And to the conflicts of society are to be added the convulsions of nature: tempests engulfing navies; earthquakes swallowing up cities; famine decimating populations. Thus, on looking without, we meet the problem of evil in history and in nature. And when we turn our eye within, we find it reappearing under the form of sorrow and suffering. Is it not, in fact, our almost

General interest of the subject.

unvarying lot either to suffer, or, what is worse still for many hearts, to see suffer? Finally, whoever will descend into the sphere of conscience and duty will there hear a voice ceaselessly upbraiding him for having himself perverted his moral liberty;* and the problem of evil will reappear in the agonies of repentance and the bitterness of moral impotency.

Motives to its discussion.

In approaching this problem we are not influenced by mere intellectual curiosity: higher interests are at stake. There is danger lest, by the contemplation of so much evil without us and within, our judgment hesitate to believe in the good; lest our heart, growing discouraged, dare no longer hope for happiness; lest the soul finally come even to doubt of God. And it is natural enough that the poet, in shaping this thought into musical words,† should awaken in our souls a lively response. In grappling with the problem of evil I do not hope to raise all the

* Une voix sera là pour crier à toute heure :
Qu'as-tu fait de ta vie at de ta liberté ?
ALFRED DE MUSSET.

† Pourquoi donc, ô Maitre suprême !
As-tu créé le mal si grand,
Que la raison, la vertu même,
S'épouvantent en le voyant ?
Comment, sous la sainte lumière,
Voit-on des actes si hideux ;
Qu'ils font expirer la prière,
Sur les lèvres du malheureux ?
ALFRED DE MUSSET.

vails, to dissipate all mysteries, to answer all questions. Excuse me from such presumption.

What I wish and hope to do is this. The study of this sad subject has been profitable to me personally. During a protracted survey of the shadowy domain of evil, I have successively risen to brighter visions of the light of good. This experience has given me courage to undertake to confront the great difficulties of the discussion which we commence to-day. My hope is to associate you with my thoughts; to conduct you along the path which, though arduous, was yet so salutary to myself. I am not an artist seeking to captivate by beauties of speech, nor a master teaching with authority; I am simply a fellow-traveler who, thinking that he has made, in the obscure valley which we are all traversing, a few steps in the direction of the light, would gladly show you the way.

Spirit of the discussion.

Our aim to-day will be to define the idea of the good, then to characterize more fully its nature, and, lastly, to seek what guarantee, what assurance, we can have of the reality of this idea. The order of our lecture will therefore be, Definition of the Good, Characterization of the Good, Guarantee of the Good.

General heads of the first lecture.

I. Definition of the Good.

If light did not exist we would have no idea of darkness. We cannot clearly comprehend the nature of evil, save as we have an exact idea of the good. But this word, which plays so large a part in the speech of men, is of diverse application. These varieties of application of the word "good," however, may all be reduced to three.

Three uses of the word "good."

When man is on the point of acting, he hears an interior voice speaking with authority and saying to him, Do this, and avoid that! It is the voice of conscience. That which constitutes conscience is simply this primitive feeling of obligation binding our will to do this and to avoid that. This obligation is not desire, for it often opposes the most ardent desires of our hearts; it is not constraint, for it appeals to our liberty; but it is a primitive part of our nature, distinct from every other, and constituting the basis of *obligation;* that is, it is a commanding power which we feel and admit to be legitimate. We are free, but we are not the arbiters of our liberty. "We should not, like voluntary combatants, have the presumption to place ourselves above the idea of duty, and pretend to act only of our own prompting, without need of orders from a superior. . . . Duty and obligation! these are the only words suitable for expressing our relation to the moral

1. As relating to the conscience.

law." Thus speaks Kant in his *Critique of the Practical Reason.* He says, "our relation *to the law*," and he is right. Conscience does, in fact, command us in the name of a law—a law which is universal, and which, under like circumstances, prescribes absolutely like duties to all. There exists a law proposing duty to the free will, and we say that the will is *good* when it fulfills the duty or obligation.

I know that this obligation and this law have been denied. There is a certain class of thinkers and of men of the world who say that the words "obligation," "virtue," "moral law," are but deceptive words involving at bottom only motives of self-interest and vanity. We will not undertake here a general examination of this theory; we submit but one remark. The idea of the good is that alone which gives dignity to life. Those who deny the moral law and obligation have no other alternative than either to be inconsistent and to be better than their theory, (which in fact is often the case,) or to call down upon themselves the contempt both of others and of themselves. To do the good is to accomplish obligation or duty. And *the good*, in the first sense of the word, constitutes the law of our will.

But we employ the word in a second sense when we speak of the *goods* of life: health, fortune, pleasure, reputation, power. But what is it that we seek in riches, or power, or reputation? what, alas! in the

gratification of envy and revenge? It is always one and the same thing. In the objects of all our passions, bad as well as good, we seek but this one thing: pleasure, delight. Whatever we desire, we desire it as a means of enjoyment. If the miser sacrifices every other pleasure for the possession of gold, it is because the possession of gold is to him a pleasure surpassing all others, and for no other reason. Enjoyment is the food of the soul; deprived of this aliment it languishes and pines away. Our hearts are so skilled in its pursuit that they succeed in finding it even in suffering itself; so that the poets can without the least absurdity sing of the delights of melancholy and the charms of sadness. The desire of happiness is like the sentiment of obligation, a primitive indestructible part of our nature. You could as easily persuade the water to abandon its natural channel, as man to abandon the pursuit of happiness.

2. 'As relating to the heart.

Here, again, we meet with a certain philosophy opposing itself in the paths of truth—a false wisdom, whose erroneousness we must detect. True wisdom teaches that there are false goods which must be renounced if we would find the true good, false happiness which must be sacrificed to the true; inasmuch as true happiness, that for which our nature is intended, can be found only in a life regulated by the law of conscience. True wisdom teaches that the soul, even when called to sacrifice to duty all ex-

The creed of Epicureanism.

ternal enjoyments, can find in the simple accomplishment of duty a joy transcending all other joys. And experience confirms these teachings of wisdom; in meeting with but satiety and disgust in evil pleasures, man is, to some degree, driven back by the very nature of things to the true pleasures which form a part of his destination. Such is the general result of sage reflection and common experience.

But a different view has been held. It has been held that we can eradicate from our soul the desire for happiness, and reduce ourselves to a state of absolute disinterestedness. So thought some of the ancients; so some of the mystics in all ages; and so a few of our modern moralists. This view is the basis of the celebrated Buddhist system, which proposes to obtain from man a sweeping renunciation of all desire. However, when you come carefully to examine the expounders of this theory you will find that they invariably speak thus: "In the paths which we commend you will find repose, you will find peace." In other words they say, "Renounce happiness and you will be happy!" To encourage us to the sacrifice of all joys they promise us joy itself as our recompense. Thus nature finds her triumph in the very contradiction in which she involves her contradictors. The soul seeks joy, happiness, *as its good;* and the second sense of the word "good" is happiness.

Of Asceticism.

But it has a third sense. And we use it in this sense when we apply the idea of good in cases where there is neither volition nor feeling, and where consequently there can be neither happiness nor obligation. In this third sense we call an object good when it answers its purpose. A lamp is good when it gives light well, because a lamp is designed to give light. A road being a means of intercommunication, we call it good when it admits of prompt and easy passage. In saying that an object answers its purpose, we have reference to a certain correlative fitness to a certain order; and we affirm that this order is realized. In this third and most general sense, the word good means simply *order*, fitness.

3. As relating to the reason.

There are, therefore, three varieties of good: obligation, duty, which is the good of the conscience; happiness, joy, which is the good of the heart; and order, fitness, which is the good of the reason. Thus we have three senses for the same word; but for this single and unique word can we not succeed in finding one single and all-embracing sense? The application of a common term implies generally a likeness of ideas; for languages—the expression of human thought—are not formed by hazard. The one general definition which I venture to propose is this: the good is *that which ought to be;* and the evil is consequently *that which ought not to be.* Con-

Good and evil defined.

sider well these two statements, for they are the sum and substance of my whole theory of evil. Practically, we are to do the good and avoid the evil, as you already know; and I have no notion of teaching any thing else. And theoretically, my rule shall be this: to reject all doctrines which deny that the good ought to be, or tend to justify the existence of evil, and to accept the doctrine, whatever it may be, which shall leave intact our two fundamental definitions. As these definitions are of so great importance in the investigation which we are undertaking, it is essential that we accurately determine their force and scope.

In order to determine *what ought to be*, it is necessary, as we have already remarked, to have in mind a plan expressive of what *is* legitimate order, what is the purpose of things, and which enables us to pronounce that the condition of things is or is not in harmony with that plan. Suppose an object of whose purpose or final cause we are entirely ignorant: we cannot say that it is good or that it is bad. Take, for example, some machine, and ask, Is it a good one? You cannot answer before learning for what it was intended. Is it a sewing-machine? a thrashing-machine? Until you determine this you can pass no judgment upon it; being ignorant of its purpose, you cannot say whether it is or is not adapted to that purpose.

The judgment "good" implies a plan.

Now, if the good is always that which ought to be,

in the sense which we have just indicated, it would seem that it is the good of the reason which is the one and all-comprehensive sense of the good. Yes, as the good is always the realization of an order, a purpose, a plan, all forms of the good are goods of the reason, or rational goods, and we see at once that the idea of *answering to its purpose* embraces also the two other senses of the word good, provided only that we admit that the will is made for duty, and the heart for happiness; that is, that the purpose of the will is obligation, and that of the heart, happiness. But it is essential to observe that the "ought to be" of the reason could not exist in our thoughts if we did not derive from conscience the primitive and unique idea of moral obligation. While the idea of obligation is wanting there are also wanting the ideas of good and evil, right and wrong. If we suppose a being capable of thought and feeling but without moral consciousness, we can comprehend that he should have notions of the agreeable, the useful, the true, the beautiful, but not of the good, in our sense of the word; for that idea, such as we have it, springs from the conscience. We pass from the law of our will to the conception of a general law of things; from the idea of what we ought to do, to the idea of what ought to be done. The judgment "good," in its widest scope, always includes the thought of an obligation for a will; the judg-

The third sense of "good" includes the two others.

ment "evil" includes likewise the thought of the fault of some will. The idea of the good is consequently conceived by the reason, but under condition of the co-operation or active presence of the conscience. There is a moral element in every judgment relating to the good.

That which has often deceived philosophers on this point, and led them to make an entire separation between moral good and what they have called metaphysical good, is the fact that the word good is applied to objects without volition, and which consequently cannot be the *subjects* of obligation. But these volitionless things may, however, be *objects* of obligation for the volitions of free beings. A house, for example, is under no obligation; but the predicate *bad*, as applied to a house, includes at bottom a complaint against the architect, who *ought* to have made it good. In the "ought to be" of the reason there is always an element of conscience, since without the conscience the word *ought* would have no meaning. In the idea of the good there is realized thus an intimate union between reason, which conceives a plan, and conscience, which attaches thereto the idea of obligation. When reason conceives the good it becomes in some sort the organ of the absolute conscience, and pronounces an "ought to be" which is valid throughout the universe.

The word good always implies ultimately an "ought."

These statements can be justified, I think, by a

detailed review of all the cases in which we use the predicate "good." It can be shown that in every instance where the word is not perverted from its primitive and natural signification its employment presupposes, together with the idea of a plan, also that of a power which ought to realize it, and which does wrong if it does not realize it. But this demonstration would necessarily be very long, and perhaps superfluous. I therefore confine myself here, in general terms, to showing the unity of the three above-mentioned forms of the good; that is, to showing the harmony of happiness, which is the good of the heart, and order, which is the good of the reason, with duty or obligation, which is the good of the conscience. Let us begin with happiness or pleasure.

It may seem harshly paradoxical to pretend that there is in pleasure, happiness, a moral obligation, and that the conscience and heart may be reduced to harmony. From the tragic agonies of the Cid of Corneille, wavering between his honor and his mistress, to the prosaic case of a student, hesitating in the morning between his place in school which awaits him and the charms of his bed which retain him, is not our whole life one continual conflict between those two elements of which I affirm the concord, namely, the conscience and the heart? It is true there are bad pleasures; it is true the law of the heart is not fully coincident with the law of the will;

and when we affirm that pleasure is obligatory, we do not mean that we are under obligation to seek all kinds of pleasure. "Do what you should, come what may,"* is the universal law of conscience. But from the facts that there are bad pleasures, and that our exclusively personal happiness is not the law of our will, it does not follow that pleasure is not obligatory in some sense, and for some forms of volition. We can readily see that the happiness of one may be the duty of another. Is not, for example, the happiness of the father the duty of the son? the happiness of the wife the duty of the husband?

But take the question in its most general form. Is it not true that when the law of the will is obeyed the law of the heart ought also to be fulfilled, and that happiness ought to follow the accomplishment of duty, so that happiness, without being the object of our will, is in fact the result of a good volition? To some degree we realize, in what we call the approbations of conscience, that it is a fact that happiness attends the practice of duty. But I do not speak of the fact, which often realizes itself only very imperfectly; I speak of what *ought* to be. Wherever every duty is accomplished, there, all admit, happiness ought to result; and this connection of happiness with duty is conceived by reason as one of the laws of universal order. Plato

Happiness the normal fruit of duty.

* Fais ce que dois, advienne que pourra.

has depicted an imaginary just man who, while worthy of all the rewards of virtue, was yet covered with all the opprobrium of vice.* Place yourselves now in the suffering presence of this just man. Can you possibly avoid coming at once to the thought that the world in which this just man suffers is an abnormal world? Whenever a being suffers, it must be that there is some volition to blame for the disorder; it must be that his suffering is the result either of his own fault or of the fault of others; otherwise we would have to say that there is injustice, and that the nature of things is evil. But the *nature of things* is but a mere phrase expressive of facts, but accounting for nothing. Consequently, in the presence of a world in which every duty should be accomplished, and where, notwithstanding, we should still find sorrow and suffering, the being who should be the victim of this injustice would feel himself better than the nature of the universe; he would rise up against its Creator and, "agonizing, cry out, Thou hast mocked me!" † A world of creatures continuing in moral order and yet enduring suffering would be inconsistent with divine wisdom. Hence, happiness ought to follow the accomplishment of duty; it forms a part of our destination in the plan of the universe; it *ought to be*, and enters therefore into our definition of the good.

* "Republic," Book II. † Rousseau.

Let us now try to reduce and embrace under the same definition the good of the reason. Let us show that order, fitness, as conceived by the reason, is good only because the conscience attaches thereto the notion of obligation. Wherever we see order accomplished we invariably approbate the agents who realized it. We judge thus of the works of men; and, when we stand in the presence of the spectacle of nature, our mind and heart, if not paralyzed in their natural functions, are constrained to approve and adore the Architect of Worlds, the Supreme Artist. On the contrary, wherever we meet with disorder we instinctively search for a responsible and guilty will. Whenever any thing conflicts with our desires we are inclined to complain of somebody. When the waters of Lake Leman rise a little too high on the Vaudois shores, our neighbors of Lausanne find fault with the authorities of Geneva, who, say they, have obstructed the course of the Rhone at its exit from the lake; and when the Rhone suddenly rises and overflows the streets of Lyons, the Lyonese complain of their neighbors above for having swept the forests from their hills and valleys. Wherever we see evil we are inclined to blame some free will, and this instinct does not mislead us. What does mislead us is our over-readiness in most cases to blame others when we ought to blame

Every form of good calls forth approbation.

Every form of evil calls forth blame.

ourselves, whether for our own active faults or for our presuming temerity of judgment. If it is a case of disorder observed in a sphere where neither our wills nor those of our fellows have any evident part, what is too often our course of conduct? We rise up with objections against Providence, and it is the prevalence of this perverse tendency which has mainly occasioned me to undertake these lectures. It is to answer to objections to the existence and attributes of God, that I undertake to discuss the Problem of Evil.

Purpose of these lectures.

If we find in evil an objection to the existence of God, it is because we believe that *the good ought to be*, and that it would be if there existed a Being capable of realizing that order which we conceive as legitimate.* The objection cannot be understood otherwise. The thought at bottom is this: Wherever we discover an evil which is beyond all human power, there we are ready to think God fails to do as he ought. But the statement in this naked form sounds shocking. Let us explain it. Creatures such as we, owing our all to the Almighty, can primitively have no claims whatever on God; and, God being originally the sole

God is primitively under no obligation.

* If God is under no obligation primitively, he can never *assume* any obligation. For, under what obligation is he to maintain that assumption? He has a perfect right to falsify. Or, rather, right has no meaning. One thing is as right and as wrong as another.—D. D. W.

and absolute existence, there could not possibly be any duties or obligations on his part, since there can be no obligation without an object. "If God had limited our life to two days, this would still have been a favor, and we would have been bound to spend these two days in pleasing and loving him."* It is no saint who says this; it is Voltaire. But on the other hand, as Rousseau has justly remarked, God has, so to speak, *obligated himself* by the manner in which he has constituted our soul. That which he himself has caused us to judge good, this, his own nature, or, as we say, his own glory, obligates him to do. Is it not in this sense that the Hebrews sang, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake?" Thus we conceive for the Absolute Being, not an obligation subjecting him to an objective law—for this would be absolutely inconsistent with his nature—no, but an obligation of which he himself is the author.

But he has obligated himself relatively to us.

Let us sum up these observations. There is a good of the conscience, a good of the heart, and a good of the reason; but these three forms of good

* "Si du Dieu qui nous fit, l'éternelle puissance
Eût, à deux jours au plus, borné notre existence,
Il nous aurait fait grâce; il faudrait consumer
Ces deux jours de la vie à lui plaire, à l'aimer."

are reducible* to one. The good is *that which ought to be.* It includes always an obligation for ourselves, for others, or for God, in the sense which we have just indicated. The good is not an entity, a thing; it is an order determining the relations of beings, relations which ought to be realized by free wills. When the order, the relations, are fulfilled, when the law prescribed for the will is executed, happiness ought to ensue. Thus, the good is the *résumé* and the goal of all the tendencies of our nature. It is the common object of the reason, the conscience, and the heart; of the reason as order, of the conscience as duty, of the heart as happiness.

By the help of this view we can now more worthily appreciate one of the most beautiful conceptions of ancient wisdom, the comparison in which Plato represents *the good* as the sun of spirits.† We all know the *role* of the sun in nature. Melchthal, in Schiller's *William Tell,* on learning that a ferocious tyrant had put out the eyes of his aged father, thus exclaims of light: "O noble and celestial gift! all creatures live of light; every happy thing, the plant itself, turns joyfully to the light. But *he* must sit, groping in night, in eternal gloom!" The sun of nature holds

* Not, I think, *reducible to* the *ought,* but *coverable by it.* It is not reduction to a simple, but bringing under a more generic, predicate. The *ought* is a threefold *ought.*—D. D. W.

† "Republic," Book VII.

intimately associated in its rays warmth and light, and for this reason the plant turns toward it. The good, the sun of spirits, the true light of reason, holds inseparably associated in its rays, duty, and happiness, and for this reason our souls turn to *it*. Yes, our souls, when not perverted from their natural orbit, gravitate toward the good and love it. This statement, perhaps, surprises some of you. To see us act, one would hardly suspect our natural love of the good, and on looking into our hearts we hardly perceive it ourselves. Assuredly we do not often enough love the good with that effectual virile love which issues in works. Our exact condition is this: we do not welcome the good when it comes under the form of duty, for then it commands and condemns us; but in and of itself we love it, for it is the supreme beauty, and whenever we are personally out of the question, this natural love makes itself felt. O, if we could only be good without effort, without sacrifice, what numberless devotees virtue would have! This is readily seen in circumstances where we are personally disinterested. Cicero narrates that "an aged man of Athens having come to the theater, not one of his fellow-citizens offered to help him to a place; but, having approached the embassadors of Lacedemon, who occupied reserved places, these rose up all of them and received him among themselves. The entire assembly broke

The soul normally loves the good.

out in applause. This gave occasion to the remark, that the Athenians knew the good, but were unwilling to do it."* How many of such Athenians are to be found elsewhere than at Athens! Observe what transpires in our public spectacles. Represent a young woman in prey to the most terrible of temptations, to the seductions of flattery and gold, to the most diabolical of treacheries, so that she shall see on the one hand vice and fortune, and on the other conscience and poverty. Cause her to maintain her purity, to pass through corruption untouched, and to prefer poverty and a good conscience. Do this, and you will be sure to excite applause; you will make even hardened libertines weep with sympathy.

Homage of vice to virtue.

This throws light upon one of the mysteries of Providence in the government of the world. How is it that the moral law has succeeded in maintaining itself? Many centuries ago Sophocles did honor, in Greek tragedy, to this sublime law which oblivion can never abolish. This law, in fact, has always survived. Time has swept away many thrones and republics, many charters and constitutions, but the moral law still stands fast. And yet what law has been more violated, more denied, more assailed, than it? And it still exists in all its vigor, with its two terrible sanctions: *remorse*, the punisher of accom-

* *De Senectute*, xviii.

plished crime, and *ennui*, the scourge of wasted lives. Our very manner of assailing the moral law betrays our conviction that it is unassailable. Though succeeding but too often in accrediting false maxims to justify our bad conduct, still it is not so much the moral law that we deny, as, rather, that we plead, in excuse for violating it, the force of exceptional circumstances in our own case. We will the good, the right; we even approve and love them—in others.

Bad men do not directly assail the moral law.

Take the case of that statesman, for example, who meditates the duping of his *confrères*, acting out the maxim that speech was given to man to disguise his thoughts; who supposes that, even in the sphere of politics, this man pretends to believe in the propriety of deception as a general maxim? Let one of his clerks prepare for him a false political report, and he is as ready as any one else to insist on the duty of truthfulness. That banker who enriches himself by criminal abuse of the confidence of his creditors, and who is preparing bankruptcy for others and infamy for himself, does he think of dignifying theft into a universal moral law? Let one of his subordinates appropriate a few dollars from his safe, and he will very soon recall the chapter of the catechism which enjoins respect for the rights of property. His subordinate is a thief, but for himself there is some exceptional circumstance to plead. It is thus that

we are prone to seek excuses for violating duty in special cases, while at the same time we admit the validity of the moral law in general. We approve of the law; we apply it to others; we practice it in the world—save where we find selfish pretexts for violating it. And all the sophisms to which we then resort in self-justification are but so much homage rendered by vice to virtue. We are made for the good, and, when it does not come into conflict with our evil proclivities, we choose it and love it.

The good is an order, a state of relations, which ought to be. This definition embraces the reason which conceives the order, and the conscience which pronounces it obligatory; and as the good commends itself to the heart by its own peculiar attraction, so all the powers of the soul, provided they are not perverted from their normal direction, are turned toward the good. We must now more specifically characterize the nature of the good, answering the question, What is this order which ought to be?

II. Characterization of the Good.

That which ought to be, among intelligent moral agents, is the accomplishment of the moral law. But what is this law? Cannot its manifold prescriptions be reduced to one all-embracing expression? I think so, and propose for your acceptance this formula: That the duty which comprehends in itself all duties

is the consecration of each member of society to the general good of the whole, (his own good included), that is, to the happiness of mankind—meaning by happiness, not transient pleasures which may be in conflict with, but a state of happiness which cannot be realized save in that condition of order whose expression is, the moral law. What the moral law is.

All duties may be reduced to three classes: duties of *dignity*, which forbid us to abase ourselves to the rank of brutes by enslaving the mind to the body, and by prostituting speech, the organ of reason, to the service of falsehood; duties of *justice*, which require us to respect in our fellows the rights of personality, property, reputation; duties of *benevolence*, which enjoin upon us to solace our fellows in their spiritual and temporal necessities. Such is the classification of our duties which, after careful study* of the matter, has seemed to me best. Now the formula which I have above proposed embraces these three classes of duties. For, in fact, it is essential to the realization of the good of rational, spiritual society that each of its members should, so to speak, spiritualize himself by rising above an animal life, (dignity); it is essential that each, by respecting the rights of others, should contribute to render society truly spiritual, that is, free, (justice); and it is essen- Three classes of duties.

* In a course of lectures on Ethics delivered at Geneva in 1865 and 1866.

tial that each will should be prompted to the realization of the general good, (benevolence). Imagine a society of moral agents in a condition of progressive development, and in which, on the basis of justice, there should flourish more and more, mutual love; would not that society be good?

What word shall we now find for designating this devotion of each to the common good of the community? this supreme virtue which embraces all others? Comte, the founder of Positivism, has tried to answer the question by inventing a new term, *altruisme*, "othersomeness," interest in others. Moral progress, thinks he, consists in the progressive giving place of egotism to *altruisme*, or concern for others. But there is a better word. Charity, a term which in common usage has come to be almost synonymous with almsgiving, signifies primitively, not only in the language of the Gospels, but also in that of Cicero, unselfish love—the consecration of each to the good of the others. Prestige being therefore in favor of this word, we will retain it. We hold that *charity* is a suitable general expression for the relations which ought to subsist between moral agents as members of society. This being the case, the good, as far as concerns the relations of men with each other, is the realization of charity, or the direction of the will of each toward the happiness of all.

Charity the sum of all moral duty.

How now shall we conceive of the good, as involved

in the relations of physical nature to humanity? The body evidently ought to be the instrument of the spirit. External nature ought to be the condition of the life of the body; ought to give impulse to the investigations which culminate in science; to the works of industry which establish the dominion of man over matter; to the instinct of art which, taking physical beauty as a starting-point, soars aloft in search of the ineffable, the ideal. Nature in submission to spirits, spirits submitting to the law of charity—would not that be a good state of things? It is to you, the great public, that I appeal for an answer. I have not come here to teach you any thing new, but rather to remind you of what you already know; to aid you, perhaps, to brush away the dust from the depths of your souls that you may read the characters that are there engraved. I ask you, Do you not perceive—I do not mean in your practice, but in your conscience and your reason—the image of the good which I have just described? Do you not admit as a certain truth one that forces itself upon your judgment, that, in the order of fitness, in a legitimate and good condition of the universe, material bodies are made for spirits, and spirits for charity? Does this conception bear any traces of the arbitrary, the individual, the national? Is it I merely, or you, or a Russian, or an American, who conceives of the good under the form in which I present it? or is it

The ministry of nature.

not all and each of us, or, rather, humanity itself as it exists in each of us, free from all individual and national peculiarities? Is there one of you who fails still to distinguish this deep primitive voice of human nature from the discords of the surface? In fact, this voice is too often drowned by the clangor of the passions, the tumult of disorderly tendencies; but it finally succeeds in making itself heard by every soul that is earnest and calm. The destination of the soul *is* to rule our nature. To will the general good is the supreme law of moral agents. These thoughts find an echo in the depths of every conscience.

And here we come in conflict with a doctrine as ancient as human letters, but which, ridiculously enough, certain writers of the day are attempting to rejuvenate under the title of modern science. We are told that there is no good *per se*, no real and absolute good; that there are customs, and that these vary; but that, aside from these customs and their history, there is no permanent law of the good—no moral principles. We are told that many things, judged bad in Europe, are judged good in Asia; that, for example, a young American Indian obtains the praise of his father and the smile of his mother for returning home with the scalp of his foe, an act with which European parents would hardly be pleased. And from a large number of facts such as these, it has been inferred that the conscience

Some deny an objective unvarying moral law.

has no invariable character; that it is like soft wax, shaping itself indifferently to whatever pressure is applied. This view is aptly presented in these words of Montaigne, as stated by Pascal in his *Pensées:* "One sees scarcely any thing just or unjust, which does not change character in changing climate. Three degrees of polar elevation reverse the whole system of jurisprudence. One meridian, more or less, overthrows a truth. . . . Admirable justice which is limited by a river! Truth on this side of the Pyrenees, error on the other; . . . the mockery is so great, the caprice of men is so fertile, that there is not a single law that is universal. Theft, incest, the murder of infants and of parents, every thing has had its place among virtuous actions." Resting on considerations of this nature, it has been declared that the good is only an idea of relative, variable, local, temporary character, so that it is impossible to determine it in a general absolute manner. These declarations are so grave that their admission would undermine the very pillars of our moral system. Let us, therefore, examine them briefly, but seriously and in good faith.

Moral views vary. To understand well the nature and scope of this incontestable fact, it is necessary to examine more closely than we have yet done the nature of moral phenomena.

That which we call conscience is the sentiment of obligation which enjoins upon us certain modes of

action, and forbids others. Without this unique senti-
Diversity of practical moral judgments accounted for.
ment there would exist for us neither good nor evil, esteem nor contempt. Now, the idea of good and evil, and the sentiments therewith associated, constitute an essential element of human nature; the individual who should be devoid of them would be what naturalists call a *monster;* but the existence of monsters does not disestablish a species. The idea of the good exists wherever man exists in the integrity of his nature; to this there are no exceptions. But *What is good?* or, in other words, What ought man to do? It is at this point that diversity begins. We cherish our aged parents, and think we do well. Certain savages kill them to save them from the ills of old age, and think likewise that they do well. Now whence this diversity of rules of conduct? It arises from difference of belief. We hold that man has no right over the life of man; savages who kill their aged parents hold a different view. It is from diversity of views as to the nature and destination of creatures that diversities of moral
Conscience not productive of ideas.
practice arise. Conscience is not a faculty productive of new ideas; it applies the sentiment of obligation to the realization of certain intellectually perceived relations; it conforms itself to the truth, but it does not derive the truth from itself. Truth is, however, the aliment of the conscience. There is not one form of ethics for the conscience,

and another for the reason. Reason, alone and of itself, has no moral law; and conscience, alone and of itself, contains only the sentiment of obligation, the object of which, however, cannot be determined, save by the intervention of the reason. Hence all rules of practical morality are necessarily subject to the influence of speculative beliefs. Hence it is very evident that that new theory of the day, *la morale indépendante*, which pretends to sever the dependence of morality on speculative beliefs, requires of its devotees to ignore or forget the most incontestable results of anthropological science.

But the views of practical morality do vary considerably. We admit it. It is easy to refute such theorists as deny it. But I propose to submit three observations which will prevent, as I think, the deduction, from this incontestable fact, of the inferences which skepticism too hastily draws. First observation: The diversities in moral views, though real, are not so extensive as a superficial examination might lead to suppose. There exist every-where in the sphere of morals two quite distinct currents. The one is formed by usages and institutions, and by the maxims which look to the justification of the usages and institutions. This is the morality of the world, and it varies very extensively; but the cause of these variations is easily discoverable. Formerly, for example, certain publicists of the Southern States

The morality of public life.

of America constructed theories in justification of slavery. The pressure that was exerted on the social conscience by institutions and interest is in this case very evident. We see analagous facts very frequently in the works of writers on politics, who indeed seem to have a large assortment of moral theories by which to explain and justify the events they narrate, and in which they have often shared.

The morality of the conscience.

But alongside of this zigzag and broken current, there is another. There is a morality which we call the morality of the conscience, without forgetting that it is participated in by the reason, and influenced by speculative views. This current of morality varies less than the former, and varies only in developing itself in a uniform direction. We are not justified in attributing to the morality of the conscience the variations which belong only to the morality of society. Institutions and usages do not always give a correct idea of the true thoughts of a people. Our foundling hospitals do not prove that family duties have no sanction in our theories of morality. Now, we often judge half-civilized and illiterate nations by their usages and institutions; and yet, perhaps, among these same nations, conscience finds true champions, but whose protests against certain immoral usages remain unknown to us. But in cases of nations which have a written history it is easy to show, that the morality of the conscience varies less

extensively than is usually supposed. The ancient books of India, of China, and of Persia contain some very pure rays of truth, some very high conceptions of the good. To cite but a single example, the ancient Sanscrit poem of Valmiki, *Ramayana*, contains, among many fantastic fancies, some traits of virtue from which we might derive instruction. The heroine of the poem, Sita, is a woman of admirable purity; and the author addresses, more than once, to the personages whom he would present to us as worthy of praise, the encomium, that they find their pleasure in the pleasure of all creatures.

Notwithstanding, therefore, the considerable variations in usages and institutions, and in the maxims which justify them, we find nevertheless among mankind a substratum of convictions which gives to the idea of duty a greater degree of fixity. As civilization begins and advances, these fundamental bases of morality are recognized and brought out into increasing light; and this process takes place wherever culture finds footing. Christian morality alone, in my opinion, has placed in its true light the fundamental law of moral order, and thus, by enlightening the conscience, has enabled it fully to accomplish its normal functions. Nevertheless we find among the sages of Greece and Rome, and among those of the far Orient, the enfeebled and scattered, but real, rays of that light which illuminates

Steady growth of ethical knowledge.

us to-day. It is only a superficial examination of facts that can lead to the notion that there is no limitation to the discordancy of moral beliefs; a deeper study corrects this impression.

Second observation: When truth is presented to the conscience it recognizes it, adheres to it, and, save in exceptional cases, (which constantly recur in the sphere of morals, for the reason that it is the domain of liberty,) never again separates from it. When man, carried away by passion, forsakes the good which he has known, it is generally the case that his conscience continues faithfully to remind him of the laws which his conduct is violating. This is one of the reasons of the indispensableness of distraction to those whose lives are guilty; they flee from themselves, so to speak, only in order to avoid the sight of an unwelcome light which beams forth in the soul as soon as it is in repose, and sheds too bright a glare upon the darkness of an external life of disorder.

Conscience retains the light which it once receives.

The general history of humanity already illustrates the same truth. When it is asserted that every nation has its peculiar ethics as well as its religion, and that we have no good reason for supposing ourselves in the right rather than the Hindoos, the Chinese, or the Greenlanders, it is forgotten that diverse forms of civilization do not enter as equal factors in the development

The potency of a civilization the test of its normalcy.

of mankind. When two forms of civilization come into contact, and, after a long conflict, finally shape themselves into a new civilization, what is the result? Morally, the more corrupt form usually corrupts the other; intellectually, the more enlightened brings the other to its light. Without turning over widely the pages of history, look simply at what is transpiring under our own eyes. European civilization—or, to call it by the name which indicates its source, Christian civilization—is visibly accomplishing the conquest of the world. Its triumph is but a question of time, as all admit. It advances, it attacks, but has no need of self-defense. Christians are busy in putting down the immoral and cruel practices of Asia and Africa; but the Indians make no attempts to introduce among us the system of caste or of human sacrifice, and the blacks of the equator send no missionaries to convert to the barbarism of their customs the people of France and England. The principles of dignity, of justice, and of benevolence, which form the basis of our ethical views, are the sole principles in which the conscience recognizes its true nature.

It is vain to object, that this is only our opinion, and that contrary opinions have exactly the same value for those who adopt them. We have in favor of our view the weight of an immense and incontestable fact. Our opinions are taking possession of

the whole globe; Asiatics and Africans will affirm it as well as we. The future of the world belongs to our moral ideas; our free-thinkers even, do not doubt it. Do you wish a proof of this? Hear what they say, and read what they write, when, not engaged in defending their skeptical views, they betray their real thoughts. We repeat it, the history of the race, and an examination of its actual condition, refute the notion that the conscience yields equally to all forms of moral doctrine. That moral doctrine which has vital power to destroy all others, and to possess itself progressively of the human race, is manifestly the doctrine which is adapted to man, and which man does not renounce when once he has received it. This fact is of immense significance.

The future of the world belongs to Christian civilization.

Third observation: When a man has ascended a degree in the scale of moral conceptions, he can see well enough how false notions of virtue should be formed in the inferior regions. But the inverse is not the case; the mind that is blinded by a belief in false virtues cannot understand, and, in fact, absolutely misconceives, the nature of true virtue. He, for example, who, like Zamore in *Alzire*, believes that vengeance is a virtue, sees only weakness and cowardice in the man who forgives. But when, after a violent inward struggle, the Emperor Augustus brings himself to pardon

Higher virtues not understood by lowor, but not *vice versa*.

Cinna, who, though overwhelmed with benefits, had yet conspired to assassinate him, we can readily imagine the exalted emotions which this triumph over self called forth in his soul.* And while in this state of mind he understood well enough the false virtue of vengeance, and saw with all clearness the error of the violent and passionate man, who sees only weakness in the spiritual triumph of him who forgives.

I hope, by the light of these three observations, to put you on your guard against the approaches of moral skepticism, which is, in fact, one of the most dangerous forms of the spirit of doubt. Doubtless we are as yet very far from possessing moral truth in its most perfect developments and applications, for we are far from having fully profited by the light which we have already had. But our Christian morality has an all-conquering vital power, and it enables us to understand all the lower degrees of moral development; it gives a perfect explanation of the origin and nature of the false maxims which passion has generated, and of which we discover the germs in ourselves.

* Je suis maître de moi comme de l'univers.
Je le suis, je veux l'être. O siècles, ô mémoire !
Conservez à jamais ma dernière victoire.
Je triomphe aujourd'hui du plus juste courroux
De qui le souvenir puisse aller jusqu'à vous.
Soyons amis, Cinna, c'est moi qui t'en convie.

CINNA, act v, scene 3.

Conscience is not like soft wax, taking indifferently every shape. Let me suggest a better comparison. Those of you who have climbed our Alps have perhaps noticed near the limits of woody vegetation certain trees clinging desperately to a rocky surface. The uncongenial soil has tortured their roots; snows and ice-slides have disfigured their trunks; the cold has dwarfed the growth of the branches, and the teeth of the chamois have put the climax to their deformity.

Conscience comparable, not to wax, but to the vital principle in vegetation.

These wretched trees adapt themselves, it is true, to these deforming influences. But they have within themselves a vital principle —the principle of a far different growth and development. This development they can only attain under the conditions of fertility of soil and abundance of sunlight. But even here it is not the soil and the sun which determine their superior forms; it is only when they find congenial nutriment, soil, light, moisture, that their genuine germinal nature is enabled to realize itself. Now it is thus of the human conscience. Conscience is primitively adapted to recognize true moral principles, but it has not the power of producing them unaided. Error, passion, interest, deform it. But give it only the soil of truth, and it will spring up to a far different development. Until you have accepted this thought, you cannot understand the history of humanity. You will be unable to account for certain great facts so long as you

refuse to admit that the will has a law which it seeks, and that the conscience can find satisfaction only in a definite conception of the good.

There is a positive principle of good and evil, and in the diversities of our theories and usages we more or less approximate this existing law. I hope to induce you to admit, that, despite the doubts that may have passed over the surface of your minds, you have never seriously thought otherwise—never can think otherwise.

Consider, that if in the sphere of morality there was nothing but fluctuations, but no permanent law, the very words *better* and *worse*, which presuppose the good as a standard of comparison, would be utterly without sense. Some modern writers have wished to substitute for the idea of good the idea of progress. But this was surely thought run mad. Progress being simply an approaching of the good, we could not conceive of progress save in view of some—obscure, it may be, but yet positive and real—idea of the good. Without the idea of the good in our thoughts we could know nothing either of progress or decadence, but only of mere changes. Attempt, if possible, to think in this manner. Attempt to think that a generous and devoted man is *different* from an egotist, who basely sacrifices the interests of his fellows to his own personal desires, but that he is not *better*. Try to think

The words "better" and "worse" presuppose an unvarying standard of comparison.

that the moral condition of the lowest savages, who pass from murder to debauch, and from debauch to murder, is *different* from the moral condition of the most upright people of Europe, but that it is not *worse.* You may attempt, but you cannot succeed in so thinking. Doubtless you may say so; but if, on seriously examining your inmost thoughts, you still persist in saying so, then you would evidently present a case to which the remark of Spinosa would apply—that, in order to cure a doubt which exists only in words, there is need not for arguments, but for a specific against obstinacy.

In the variations of morals and ethical ideas there are progresses and decadences, as no one seriously denies. There are changes which are generally admitted as true progress; there are others which are universally considered as steps backward. Let us examine some of these changes, and we will encounter again the true idea of the good.

The practical application of steam and electricity are improvements of which our century is justly proud. We do not sympathize with those narrow spiritualists who speak with disdain of what they call "mere material conquests." But what do we see here? We see the human mind mastering more and more the agents of nature, and succeeding, to some extent, in triumphing over space and time. These are surely noble

The significance of material conquests.

conquests. But if these victories over nature were employed only in satisfying the body, in multiplying the delights of the flesh—if telegraphs and railroads, instead of contributing to spread over the globe intelligence and spiritual light, contributed only to increase the luxury and practical materialism of life—who then would hesitate to call them steps backward? You will not dispute these two statements: mind progresses in conquering nature; it declines in becoming subservient thereto.

Let us now pass to the social sphere. When we see justice prevailing more and more in institutions, the poor and the rich equally favored in the sanctuary of the law; when we see benevolence increasing in our customs, the different classes of society laying aside their feuds and mutually aiding each other in ameliorating the evils inseparable from our earthly condition—that we call progress. No one can think otherwise. Can you possibly think that it would be well that force should supplant right, and trample justice under foot? that hatred and war should take the place of mutual good-will? Can you admit that barbarism is not worse than civilization? You cannot.

The good the goal of all true progress.

There are, therefore, degrees of progress, incontestable progress. In our relations to nature, progress is the increase of the domination of mind over matter. In the relations of men to each other, progress is the

development of that charity which crowns justice with benevolence. Now, progress is simply advancement toward the good. In admitting the forms of progress which we have just passed in review, we declare that it is good that nature be subject to mind, and that mind be subject to the law of charity. Our formula is therefore justified; the good is known to us. That nature be subject to mind, that mind be subject to the law of charity, is the legitimate order of the universe, as conceived by reason, and as declared obligatory by the conscience.

We are able now to construct, above and outside of our widely variant national and individual usages and tastes, the great outlines of the edifice of the good as it is conceived by man as man. Let us do so. Let us suppose a society which is good. Let us take from it all war, tyranny, revolt, theft, prostitution, murder—in fact, all the shameful and bloody plagues of humanity. Let the men be temperate and strong, and let them be successively gaining the mastery of nature by the light of science and the labor of industry. Let the women be chaste and dutiful, transmitting to the rising generation the heritage of their virtues. Suppose the families and the state to abound in that peace which springs of mutual love. Such a society would be happy indeed, for the treasures of joy of which the human heart is capable are almost infinite.

Society as conscience calls for it.

Have you ever gone over in thought the long catalogue of joys which we lose by our own fault? I was returning into Geneva, not long since, on a radiant autumnal evening. The air was tranquil, the sun had just sunk behind the chain of the Jura, a calm transfiguring glory crowned the mountain peaks. It was a joy to respire and gaze, and I thought of the many for whom this joy was lost by their own faults. Above all I thought of myself, and of the occasions when, absorbed with profitless cares, I had neglected pure joys that are always at hand. How numberless are the joys offered to us in the contemplation of nature, in the relations of family and friendship, and in honest and successful labor! How happy the world if we could eliminate from it all evil! But would that be enough? would that fully satisfy our aspirations for the good? No! And why? Because of death. So long as the thought of death, of real death, is before us—of that death which is not a transformation of life, the passage from one stage of existence to another, but an end of life, an annihilation—so long as the thought of death is before us we may enjoy some elements of good, but not the full good to which our soul aspires, the supreme good.

A reminiscence of the author.

In youth we are full of confidence in life; and death itself, appearing only at the distant horizon, and shrouded in the mists of the future, has even something of the poetic and melancholic. But let age

advance, and the limit of life begin to be felt; let the somber fingers of death begin to assume more definite lineaments, and we wake up to the thought that each hour is bringing us nearer to our coffin, and is hollowing out the grave for the loved ones about us; we feel that the river of life is flowing without rest, and that the river leads to the abyss. And then a profound sadness takes hold on the soul; for it is horrible to feel that all that we have and are is passing from us. This is one reason why so many men fear to look into their own hearts when alone. Some, as we have said, fear this because solitude renders audible the voice of remorse; but others dread it lest, in the silence of the hum of the world, they hear in their souls the terrifying voice, "Mortal, thou art to die!" Death contradicts our nature. It is vain to speak of the leaves which fade and fall, of the seasons which come and pass; it is vain to try to impress upon us that death is a natural function of life; we refuse to admit the force of such analogies—the soul protests.

The fearfulness of Death.

I know that certain materialists, who assume to be sages, mock at the pretentiousness of insignificant man in his wish to live forever; but mock as they may, they also in their sober moments think and feel just as we. Their laugh is the hollow laugh which disguises tears; and if at times it is coarse and boisterous, it is, perhaps unconsciously to themselves,

because they wish to stifle the voice of their own hearts. For, in fact, death, in the sense of ceasing to exist, would be a disorder contrary to our whole spiritual constitution: to the conscience, because conscience calls for an unlimited growth in perfection, which, as we know too well, is not attainable in this life; to the heart, because the heart is made for perpetual affections, and is rudely broken by severance from the objects of its love; and to reason, because our nature is so manifestly constituted for life that, on the supposition that we are actually destined to death, we can discover no sort of correspondence between its constitution and its destination.

Death protested against by conscience, heart, and reason.

We clearly see the grand outlines of the good—that is, of the order of things—which would fulfill our aspirations. These aspirations claim not merely the prolongation of life such as it here is; for so great is the disproportion between the wants of the soul and the actual realities of this life, that sometimes we become satiate of life and ripe for death. We aspire to a life *other* than this—a kingdom of the good, of whose brightness we catch some positive, though confused, glimpses even from the midst of our present darkness. And if this vision were really but a will-o'-the-wisp, if we open our eyes on the marvelous light of this world but to close them finally forever, then our life, were it prolonged even

The soul aspires to a life other than this.

to patriarchal age, and under conditions otherwise absolutely good, would not only be sad because of the prospect of its end, it would be absurd in itself. Either our conception of the good is chimerical, or we are constituted for life, for life immortal.

But we are asked for proofs of immortality. Let us state the question properly. It is impossible to study the tendencies, the aspirations, the needs of the soul, without being forced to admit that life is the affirmation of, the thesis guaranteed by, our spiritual constitution. To whoever, therefore, demands proofs of immortality, I answer that it is for him to speak first, and I ask that he furnish me proofs of death. But how is one going to demonstrate death, in the sense of a cessation of personal being? Let us see.

A man falls sick. His heart finally ceases to beat; his limbs become motionless; his body begins to decompose; it is carried to the grave-yard. The grass springs and grows green on his grave; the overhanging willow renews its foliage; but the dead comes not again. Let us state this in the language of science. Within the limits of our present experience, the soul manifests itself only by the means of our present body. But is that all the proof we have of death? It is. I do not think that the most subtile of the materialistic philosophers, were he at the same time the best of modern physiologists, could produce, in favor of his cause, a proof, which would amount to more

than this simple statement: Within the limits of our present experience spirits manifest themselves to us no more after the dissolution of their present bodies. But who can assure them that there is no other experience than the present, no other body than that which we know, and no other life than that which now is? But this very assumption is their starting-point and the sole basis of their argument. What, I ask, have they in favor of their assumption? Nothing; absolutely nothing. Whatever be their display of science, their thought at bottom never contains more than this trivial commonplace of the rabble: When people die we see them no more, and nobody ever came back to bring us news from the other world.

Present experience not the measure of all possible experience.

Nobody has come back with news! But who, then, has returned with this frightful news, that death swallows up life forever? Who, then, has traversed the universe from point to point, and that, too, with senses to perceive the many things which doubtless lie beyond the reach of ours, and has finally returned to tell us: "I have seen every thing, even to the limits of space, and nowhere have I found the dead alive!" Who, then, has risen from the dark womb of Naught to inform us that the abyss has actually swallowed up all who have lived? Our dead are no longer with us in the present life; we know it—our hearts suffer so deeply therefor that we know it only too well. If

you say, there are no proofs of a future life in the eyes of science as you understand it—namely, that science which admits no other realities than those which fall under our five senses—very well; but when you affirm the annihilation of beings and things simply because they fall no more under the observation of our actual senses, surely you reason very poorly. How will you answer the heart? the conscience? the reason? I insist on this latter word *reason;* how will you answer the conviction reached by reason, when weighing the spiritual facts of our nature, and attempting to account for them? To the cry of human nature in its totality, and aspiring toward life, you oppose the objection that our knowledge is the measure of all that exists—that beyond our present sensible experience there is nothing. Surely that is a very narrow style of thought. And I can well comprehend the slightly haughty disdain with which Cicero treats the *petty* philosophers,* as he calls them, who, in the presence of a being so manifestly formed for life, dare affirm that the soul perishes when the body dissolves.

Cicero's indignation at the presumption of skeptics.

No one, in fact, really denies the fact of the aspirations of the human soul, which we have just affirmed. In all time and in all countries man has desired—I do not say has invariably believed in—an immortal future. He desires it because he is conscious of the

* "Minuti philosophi."—*De Senectute*, xxiii.

good, and because, even should he aspire after it with all the powers of his soul, he yet feels that its complete realization is unattainable in this present state.

The good presupposes immortality, and the heart is athirst for immortal life. This is not denied; but still it is asked, What does all that prove? The answer to this depends on how we answer this other question: Does there exist in the universe so great a disorder as that beings manifestly organized for life are in fact destined to death? This problem was the ultimate source of the doubts as to future life in all ancient philosophy, whether Greek or Indian. Now, honest doubt is but one of the phases of discouragement; the shadows which darken the future are cast from the clouds which vail, from us, the good, the sun of souls. When the soul has once a firm faith in the good, in order, reason will infer, immediately and without a shadow of hesitation, from man's spiritual constitution to his eternal destiny. If the good is to be realized, then life does not cease at what we call death. The good guarantees—presupposes—life; but what is it that guarantees the good? This is the last question which our subject raises.

III. Guarantee of the Good.

What is it that guarantees the good? I answer, God. I will not enter here upon the general question of the existence of God.

God the only sufficient guarantee of the good.

I have treated that elsewhere.* Nature and humanity, heart, reason, and conscience, presuppose, imply, God. This sacred name is at the base and cap-stone of every thing—at the beginning and termination of all processes of healthy thought. The existence of God is not demonstrated like other truths, for it is the primitive truth on which all other truths are suspended; so that we have no other alternative than to decide either for faith in God, or for doubt, absolute, irremediable, all-embracing. I limit myself here to a single observation: The good presupposes God, and God guarantees the good. This is a circle, but a circle that will not appear vicious to those who have deeply enough examined the laws of thought to know, that all truth terminates ultimately in a circle of light, whereas the characteristic of error is inevitably to end in contradiction.

A circle, but not a vicious one.

The good implies God. To understand this, let us remember that the idea of the good, as held by the reason, originates in the conscience. Conscience gives orders. Have you ever reflected on the two senses of this word, *order*. An order is a plan, and an order is a command. Conscience in its intimate union with reason is a light indicating to the will what it should do—it reveals an order; and conscience is a power enjoining the performance of what ought to take place—it issues an order for the real-

* Le Père céleste.

ization of the order which itself has revealed. It is a real power, making itself painfully felt by those who brave it.

Now, the good, being a universal idea and applicable to every thing, what is its ultimate origin? Where exists that world-plan of which we assuredly know but a few outlines? whence springs that universal light, of which a few of the rays fall upon us? The good, being obligatory on all, what is that which makes itself felt by us in and through the commands of conscience, and which we conceive as a universal power bearing on all volitions? Assuredly the good is not a mere personal conception; it is not *we* who, in the conscience, issue orders to ourselves; for these orders are constantly conflicting with our personal preferences. It must be, however, that the plan and the power which are felt through the conscience do actually exist somewhere and somehow, for they are, in their kind, just as positive realities as are the phenomena of matter. But a plan can exist only in intelligence; a power exists only in a volition; therefore, the plan of the good, whose existence is universal, can exist only in a universal spirit.

God *per se* is not the good, for the good is not a being. God, in his essence, is the absolute Being; in his relation to the universe he is the Absolute Cause; but the good being the order established by God for all creatures, God is its

The good is the plan of God in execution.

personal principle or origin, and *it* is the direct manifestation of his eternal will.

Abandon this position, and you will fall into the darkness of speculations which may seem profound because they are obscure, but which will be obscure only because they are false. You may, no doubt, busy yourself in the practice of the good without making it the object of philosophical speculation; but so soon as you propound the question, Where and how can the good *per se* exist? you will be forced to conclude either that the good is the plan of God, and the conscience the manifestation of his will—which will give you firm footing for your thoughts—or that the good and the conscience are absolutely inexplicable enigmas. As soon as you reject God, conscience and the good, losing all support, fall away and vanish; and, as the skepticism which then enters the soul strikes at the validity of reason no less than of conscience, the only course for an honest person in such circumstances is, silence. The choice which must be made is between God, on the one hand, and an absolute irremediable skepticism on the other. I choose God, and for reasons which, I repeat, I have elsewhere given at large.

The good is, as we have shown, the plan of God, revealing to our conscience that which we ought to do, and to our reason—through the mediation of the idea of duty which it derives from the conscience—

that which ought to be done. Our will is good when it accomplishes faithfully the individual task proposed to it, and thus realizes, for its part, the plan of the universe; from which we may see that Plato did not unaptly sum up all goodness in the single expression, Likeness to God—which may well be translated thus: Harmony of the created will with the creative will.

In God himself, the good cannot be the conforming to a rule which is external to himself, inasmuch as nothing exists independently of him, neither matter, nor spirits, nor, consequently, the good itself. The good, being in fact not an entity, but the expression of the relations which ought to exist between beings, the existence of the good independently of the matter and the spirits whose relations it regulates, is a mere abstraction void of all reality. The good manifests the creative will in the relations of creatures, as the creatures themselves manifest the created will by their lives. The good is therefore identical with the supreme will. To speak of *the good*, and to speak of *the will of God*, is to speak twice of the same thing.

The good and God's will identical.

The identity of the good with the will of God is a truth of immense practical importance. To make a distinction between the will of God and the good, and to hold that these two ideas have a separate validity, is a dangerous and hurtful error. It produces, on the one hand, in many devout persons, an

The contrary opinion tends to uncharitableness and fanaticism.

indifference for those forms of charity which are not exclusively ecclesiastical, (as if there could be any forms of good which the Gospel does not commend,) and, on the other, it leads to the fatal delusions of fanaticism. I know how words are misused; I know that a certain class of persons stigmatize as fanaticism all sincere and whole-hearted devotion to one cause; I know, that to bring it into reproach, they brand with this term the purest, the noblest of enthusiasms; but the word, nevertheless, has its proper use, and designates a real and dangerous perversion of the human soul. Fanaticism proper—that which is intolerant and proscriptive—consists in believing that the will of God may be separated from the good, and that evil may be done to promote the cause of God. This notion has brought great scourges upon humanity and great reproaches to religion. Fortunately it is an error that is essentially repugnant to the general voice of conscience in all ages, as well as to true philosophy. The most ancient odes of humanity celebrate the pure, the holy, the incorruptible; and they never separate the thought of the Author of the world from that of moral perfection. The religious sentiment has been sadly perverted by the worship of the immoral divinities of paganism; but the perversion was perceived, and conscience entered its protests. The great poets, those

Conscience protested against polytheistic vice.

reflectors of popular sentiment, joined with Euripides in his protest against the worship of vice: "If the gods do wrong, they are no longer gods." *

Despite numerous and sad aberrations, it may safely be said, that the natural direction of the religious sentiment leads it to recognize the indissoluble union of the good and the divine will. The Lucifer of Lord Byron can alone reason otherwise; but the human race thinks, with the Adah of the poet, that "Omnipotence must be all goodness." But if the race in general thinks so, how of the atheists? The atheists think so also, as I think I can convince you. What is their chief argument, the one which, overpassing the limits of the schools, has made some noise in the world? It is this: "If there were a God, there would not be so much evil." What now is the basis of this argument? It is the idea that God is essentially goodness, so that to show that the world is not good is to demonstrate that it is not the workmanship of God. Thus the chief argument raised against the existence of God is based on the idea of his goodness. Surprising as it is, we see here, even at the foundation of this saddest of intellectual aberrations, a lingering glimmer of truth, namely, in that, as a final

Atheists assume the inseparableness of the ideas of God and goodness.

* Justin Martyr has collected, at the close of his treatise *On Monarchy*, this passage of Euripides, and several other analogous citations from the poets of paganism.

homage to supreme holiness, man prefers the madness of atheism to the crime of blasphemy.

The conscience is the voice of God. So are our children taught in school and family, and so teach I here before an assembled people. Loyalty to the truth would admit of no other teaching, even in the select audience of a learned society, for there are not two systems of truth. There are different degrees of knowledge of the truth. But as it is the same sun which illuminates all bodies, so there is but one and the same sphere of truth for the enlightenment of all spirits.

Some have thought otherwise in all ages. In our own day some writers of reputation declare that there is one form of truth for the masses—the false; and another for the aristocracy of thought—the true. But the strangest feature of the matter is, that this very form of truth, which, by its lofty and peculiar nature, is destined to remain the peculiar secret of the initiated few, is the form of truth which those writers are most zealous in sowing broadcast among the populace. Thus their own practice contradicts their haughty assumption. They have no pretended pearls which they do not eagerly parade before the great public. Now it is to the public at large, to the common conscience, that we address ourselves also. We say here, as we would say every-where, The conscience is the voice of God;

There is no esoteric truth.

or, to lay aside all figures, The moral law is the expression of the Divine plan, and the binding authority of conscience is the immediate perception of the Supreme Power.

We have asked, What is the guarantee of the good? We now know the answer. The good is the thought or plan of the Eternal, the will of the Almighty. He said to matter, Let there be order! and the celestial spheres began their harmonious revolutions in the depths of space. He has said to his free creatures, Let the good be done! be just, and ye shall be happy. And in this, the promise is inseparable from the command. All that conscience prescribes, all that the pure heart desires, all that sound reason conceives, is the good; and all that is good is God's will. The good is not immediately realized by God, because, in the spiritual sphere, the good must be accomplished by liberty; the creature, made in the image of God, must become a worker with God. This is the end, the goal to be attained, the ideal to be realized; it can fully exist at first only in the plan revealed to the conscience, and the free being, who is charged with the accomplishing of the law, is capable of turning aside from his mission. But to doubt the ultimate triumph of the good is as bad as practical atheism. Let us, therefore, be of good courage and good hope; the good is guaranteed by the Almighty; that which ought to be, will be.

Reason for hopefulness.

LECTURE II.

EVIL.

In defining the good we have at the same time defined evil, which is its contrary. Evil is not the absence of the good; the absence of a thing is nothing, and evil is not a nothing; it is a reality, unfortunately very real—the contrary of the good. Just as the good is not an entity, a thing, but an order in the relation of beings; so evil is not an entity, a thing; it is a disorder in the relation of beings; it is a disturbance in the harmony of the universe. There exist neither beings nor things, nor elements thereof, which are evil *per se*. Nothing exists, in fact, but by act of the Creator, and this act—a manifestation of the Supreme Good—has constituted each creature in a manner appropriate to its destination. In a world without free creatures, where every thing would continue to be a direct manifestation of the Supreme Will, all would be well. But wherever there is liberty all may be perverted. The reason, the heart, the will of spiritual beings may turn aside from their legitimate functions, and thus disturb the normal relations of such beings to nature; but when, aside from the derangement of functions,

Evil the contrary of good.

we consider the being in himself, then all is good. Evil is *that which ought not to be.* God wills it not—wills that it should not be; and this Supreme Will constitutes for every created will the duty of destroying it. We propose to examine the manifestations of evil, first in nature, and then in humanity; and, finally, to notice some theories which deny its existence. The subdivision of this lecture will, therefore, be Evil in Nature, Evil in Humanity, and the Negation of Evil.

General heads of the second lecture.

I. Evil in Nature.

Let us direct our attention, first, to the domain of matter in its simple and inert form. As there is here neither heart nor will, neither can there be suffering nor sin; evil, therefore, can present itself only under the form of disorder, of a false relation between objects and their destination. Now, so far as matter falls under our observation, in the fields of physics, astronomy, and geology, can we find such a form of disorder? The question requires to its answering that another one be first answered. To be able to pass a judgment as to the good or the evil in a given case, it is necessary, as we have seen, to know the plan which determines what ought to be, and to ascertain whether or not the objects in question are, or are not, in harmony with that plan.

In what sense evil can exist in nature.

But do we know the general plan of nature? No. It would seem, therefore, that judgments as to good and evil could not be made in this realm. However, incomplete as science yet is, it has succeeded by the labor of centuries in determining certain principles which throw much light on this subject.

The phenomena of nature are regulated according to a definite order. The result of the long series of evolutions which our globe has undergone has been, to produce the conditions which (1) permitted life to appear thereon, and which (2) continue to sustain it. These are certainly two ideas relative to the plan of the universe which are definitively ascertained. And we are constantly finding new confirmations of them as science progresses. Phenomena which seemed to form exceptions are falling under the rule. What appeared as fortuitous and irregular is traced back to constant laws.

Two ascertained facts as to the plan of nature.

As to our own globe, we can pretty surely retrace the marvelous changes which have wrought out its present habitable condition. When we affirm that there is evil in the facts which produced this condition, we pronounce a hasty judgment. Science as it advances shows that every thing in the physical universe is order, proportion, harmony. The glaciers of our mountains, for example, might be thought to encumber uselessly vast tracts of land, but closer

examination shows, that to them is largely due the fertility and the irrigation of our valleys and plains. The avalanche, which at first sight seems so destructive, denudes our mountain slopes only that spring may there reappear all the sooner. The earthquake, which is usually regarded as such a frightful evil, is now known to be one of the normal incidents of the internal constitution of the globe. In fine, our acquaintance with nature, though as yet not very intimate, enables us with every new advancement to hold her in better opinion.

But do you find that this, my answer to the objection that there is evil in nature, is entirely satisfactory? If you do, you are too easily contented. The order of nature is admirable; but why is it often so merciless toward man? The storm, though it may purify the atmosphere, is yet the cause of my ruined house and my overturned orchards. The earthquake may be a normal incident in the production of hill and valley and lake, but it swallowed up Lisbon and Pompeii. And the avalanche, whatever may be said in its favor, yet sweeps away and buries in its ruins the cabin and the vineyard, the shepherd and his flock. These are facts about which we venture to complain. We do not complain that there are disorders in nature *per se;* we complain of her relations to us. Why is beauteous and harmonious nature so severe against man? While gaz-

Evil in nature consists in her unfriendly relations to man.

ing on the glories of sky and cloud, of mountain and plain, of river and lake, why must our ear invariably be greeted by the sighs and wails of suffering humanity?

And here the question assumes a new phase. What we complain of is not that there is disorder in nature, but that nature inflicts sufferings on us. What we term evil in the physical world is only a relation between nature and us, a relation that interferes with our interests and shocks our sensibilities.

Evil in the animal world a mystery.

The question presents new conditions when we enter the realm of animated nature. In fact this is for us, as yet, a realm of mystery. Is there among animals any thing corresponding to what we call sin? If we deny to them the moral sentiment, have they not, at least, instincts, proclivities, which become in us sources of moral evil? Do we not observe among them sensuality, jealousy? Certainly we find among them, war. How many of the organs whose structure and adaptation the naturalist so justly admires, are simply defensive and offensive arms, instruments of resistance and means of assault! As far back as we can retrace the history of our globe, living creatures have pursued and devoured each other. Fossil bones of animals which appear to have preceded the advent of man on earth bear the traces of the teeth of their enemies, and reveal to us, after so many centuries,

the gigantic and bloody combats of which the primitive earth was the theater. Life is kept up only by death, and most frequently by a violent and painful death.

Let us cite here a few words from Joseph de Maistre: "In the vast domain of animated nature there reigns a visible violence, a species of rage, arming all creatures *in mutua funera.** Even in the vegetable world we perceive the beginnings of this law; from the immense catalpa to the most humble grass-blade, how many plants *die!* how many are *killed!* But the moment we enter the animal kingdom the proofs of the law are fearfully multiplied. In each of the great classes of animals there are a number of species whose destination seems to be to devour the others; there are insects of prey, reptiles of prey, fishes of prey, and quadrupeds of prey. There is no instant in duration wherein living beings are not devoured by others. And pre-eminent above these races of animals stands man, whose destructive hand spares nothing that has life—he kills in order to feed himself, kills to clothe himself, kills to ornament himself; he kills in attack, kills in defense, kills to instruct himself, kills to amuse himself, kills for the sake of killing. A king, haughty and terrible, he has need of every thing and is resisted by nothing. But will this law of

Words of De Maistre.

* For mutual destruction.

destruction stop at man? No, assuredly. But who is it, then, who is to exterminate him? He himself. It is man who seems commissioned to slaughter man. But how can he accomplish this law? he, who is of a moral and merciful nature? he, who is born to love? he, who weeps over others as over himself? It is war that will accomplish the decree. Do you not hear the earth crying and clamoring for blood? And it does not cry in vain; war breaks out. Man, possessed of a madness which has in it no element of hatred or wrath, rushes into the field of battle without knowing what he wants, or even what he does. Nothing is more contrary to his nature, and yet he does nothing with an equal eagerness; he is enthusiastic in doing that of which his own soul has horror.

"Thus is ceaselessly fulfilled in the whole scale of being, from the worm up to man, the great law of the violent destruction of living creatures. The entire earth, continually drenched in blood, seems little else than an immense altar, on which is to be immolated, without end, or measure, or rest, every thing that has life."*

To come into being, to suffer, to die, and to cause others to suffer and die—such is the destiny of animals! The law which weighs upon us is only an extension of the general law of all earthly life. If we do deny to animals the moral sentiment, and there-

* Abridged from the *Soirées de Saint-Pétersbourg.*

with the possibility of sin, it is at least difficult not to discover evil among them under the form of suffering. But this subject is involved in great perplexity. Before reasoning on the destiny of animals we ought to understand what it is; but our knowledge has not yet reached that point.

The state of the question is this: We possess two very distinct conceptions: that of the mechanism of bodies, where there exists only form and motion; and that of the functions of spirit, whose essential condition is consciousness of self. From these two conceptions there have arisen, as to the nature of animals, two rival theories, that of the machine-animal, and that of the man-animal. Let us examine them briefly.

Theory of the machine-animal.

The theory of the machine-animal is that of the disciples of Descartes, as also that of a small number of consistent materialists, who affirm, without faltering at any of the consequences of their theory, that every thing in the world is simply mechanism. According to these, animals are only very fine automatons; they neither feel nor think; they move, and nothing more. In support of this view some plausible considerations are urged. It is said that in the infancy of the race man uniformly imagined a soul like his own wherever he saw motion. Thus, for example, the ancients attributed souls to the stars, which revolve, and to amber, which

attracts light objects. Gradually science has done away with these fancied souls, to the profit of pure mechanism. To deny souls, minds, to animals, is but the legitimate advance of the slow process by which humanity overthrows the idols of its infancy. But this theory finds earnest opponents; in hunters, for example, who live long and familiarly with their dogs. In fact, none who sustain close and frequent relations with the higher orders of animals will consent to see nothing but mechanism in creatures whose looks and tones they have learned perfectly to understand. The thought that all beasts are but automatons clashes so abruptly with our natural convictions, that it reacts in favor of the theory of the man-animal.

Theory of the man-animal.

The second theory is largely represented in modern literature; for example, by La Fontaine, and especially by Buffon. Read the celebrated descriptions of the latter author—the tiger, the lion, the horse—and you will be surprised to notice to what degree he attributes to these animals the sentiments, the passions, the spiritual qualities of man. This method, though contributing much to the literary beauty of his works, detracts from their technically scientific value. This doctrine of the animal-man is also that of those inconsistent materialists—a large class—who succeed very readily in proving that man is only an animal by taking for granted, as a starting-point,

without waiting for very overpowering proof, that the animal *is* a man. It has, moreover, in its favor numberless facts which seem to indicate the presence of sensibility and intelligence in brutes.

The main objection to this theory is the fact of civilization, which the animal races entirely lack. It is true these races have a history, but their fate seems entirely dependent on external nature. The lack of speech, the absence of progress, seem to suggest that the animal has not full possession of himself; that, consequently, he perhaps lacks strict self-consciousness, and that the signs of suffering which he betrays do not respond, in the same sense as with us, to a really felt suffering.

Have animals true self-consciousness?

Is there, between these two theories as to the nature of animals, place for a third? Can science conceive of a mode of existence which is neither that of an automaton nor that of a free self-conscious spirit? Perhaps. It may be that we possess already some lines of thought and observation that may issue in such a result. In any case, however, the question is far from being solved; and I think true science will have frankly to admit that, as yet, it does not understand the nature of animals. In the absence of a solution of the question, I will examine, in their bearings on the problem before us, the two above-mentioned theories.

Examination of the two theories.

If we regard animals as simply a manifestation of

mechanism, as instruments of universal motion, devoid of all thought and sentiment, then assuredly there is no evil among them; all is well. They enrich the soil, transport grains, contribute to spread vegetation; in a word, they are admirable channels for the circulation of matter. All is order and harmony, as they perfectly answer their destination. Nor can we say any thing against those animals which discommode and injure us, any more than we can against poisonous plants; for all these facts, like inundations and earthquakes, appear to us as evil only because of their relations to humanity.

Now let us examine the other opinion: Animals have souls like, or at least analogous to, ours; they feel the same disharmony as we between their aspirations and their actual lot. What shall we say? Does the butterfly, which escapes from its dark chrysalis only to die a few moments later, weep over the brevity of its life? The mare of the desert who sees her foal succumb under the heat of the sun, and perish in the parched sands—does she also, like Rachel, weep and refuse consolation? The sheep which is ruthlessly taken from the flock and butchered—do its companions weep and mourn its bloody fate?

Grant for a moment that such is the case. Suppose that these deaths of animals, which rise to millions every hour of duration, do call forth the same kind of tears, the same anguish, as the numberless

hecatombs of men sacrificed on the altar of war. And what shall we have to say? We shall say simply that the realm of evil extends beyond humanity. But will this supposition affect the question before us? The problem presents itself, in man, in clear and definite terms. Our destination, as expressed in and by the constitution of the soul, is contradicted by our actual destiny. Formed for the good, we perceive evil within us; organized for life, we are the prey of death. And the problem is simply enlarged in proportion as we attribute to animals a nature like or analogous to ours. But as we do not, as yet, really know the nature of animals; and as, even in case the problem of evil should extend to them, it would still be not a new problem, but simply the old one under a new phase; so the course of wisdom would seem to be, to study this problem first in ourselves, where it presents itself in a positive and definite shape. And if we succeed here in finding a satisfactory solution, we may well anticipate that this solution will apply to the animal races in the measure that science may hereafter ascertain that their nature is analogous to ours.

Whether animals are implicated in the problem of evil, does not affect its solutions.

This is the sole safe method. To study the problem of evil in animals without understanding their nature, and then to apply the results of this study to man, would be very unnatural, and would expose ourselves to great confusion of ideas. To seek a solution in a

sphere which is full of mysteries, and not in the well-ascertained facts of our own nature, would be the reverse of a rational procedure.

Two fallacies.

But though we are forced to confess our ignorance of the character of evil as found among animals, there are two errors in connection with this ignorance which it is important to indicate and correct.

The first consists in imagining that we have explained the presence of evil in humanity by affirming that we spring from the animal, so that our passions and sufferings would also be due to that source. Even if we should admit, what is in no wise proved, that man has direct kinship with the animal, this consideration would be far from solving the question before us. The inquiry would still remain: Why is man clothed in this animal nature, and why does evil exist among animals?

The second error, which is only the first under a new form, consists in reasoning thus: Passions and suffering are but incidents of a general law; what we call evil is, therefore, simply a part of the order of nature; we find it from the lowest grades of animal life up to man. Now all that which is incidental to, or included in, the general order of nature ought to be accepted as good. The utter fallacy of such reasoning is so evident, so unworthy of the human mind, that I scarcely need beg those who have not yet

practiced it, never to be guilty of saying, "Evil is a general law; therefore every thing is good."

The study of evil in physical nature directs us inevitably to humanity, inasmuch as we find evil here only in the relations of matter to mankind, and not in matter *per se*. The study of evil in animated nature also directs us to humanity, inasmuch as we discover evil in animals only in so far as we attribute to them a nature analogous to ours. Let us, therefore, pass to humanity.

II. Evil in Humanity.

Evil presents itself among mankind under three forms: *error*, which is the evil or faultiness of the reason; *sin*, which is the evil of the conscience; and *suffering*, which is the evil of the heart. To show that error, sin, and suffering are evils, it is only necessary to show, in the light of our definitions, that they are facts which reveal a disorder, that is, a want of harmony between the condition of the human soul and its destination, as indicated by its constitution.

Threefold form of evil.

First, then, error is not ignorance. To prove that all ignorance is an evil would require us to demonstrate that the mind is destined to know all things at once and immediately, so that if we could not tell the number of stars in the skies, or of sands on the sea-shore, our soul would be in disorder.

Difference between ignorance and error.

But this is not evident, and would be difficult to prove. Let us suppose a spirit clearly conscious of what it knows and what it does not know, affirming where it should, denying where it should, and suspending judgment where it has not sufficient reasons for either affirming or denying; and suppose that this spirit is continually growing in knowledge, continually widening in every direction the horizon of its vision: in such a case, will there be any evil? will not all be good? This spirit will not of course possess all truth, but it will be full of truth; all its judgments will be true. Ignorance is an evil only when it conflicts with our immediate destination, so that our will, deprived of light, feels the need of acting, and yet has not the means of acting understandingly.

Error always an evil.

Error consists in passing false judgments; it is an evil *per se*, and in all cases. It cannot be denied that the mind is destined to possess the truth; hence error is in conflict with order, is a disorder, and often a very serious one. Our errors, for example, as to the source of true happiness, throw us into an insensate pursuit of a happiness which ever eludes us; and our errors as to duty give rise to the mysterious and deplorable phenomenon of perverted consciences. The most perplexing facts in the whole sphere of ethics are these very cases where, determined to do our duty, we yet deceive ourselves as to what it is. Evil seems to result here from the very

uprightness of the intention;* for, as Pascal has remarked, "we never do evil so thoroughly and enthusiastically as when we do it from conscience."

Error constitutes one element in our wrong actions; but error, even moral error, is not sin. Socrates held very erroneous views on this point. He held that error is the sole origin of our evil actions, that men deceive themselves as to what is duty, but that, without exception, "they do what they regard as duty."* The poet Euripides, his contemporary, could have given him on this point a lesson in true philosophy; for he wrote, "We know what is right, we are familiar with it, but we do it not."† Error and sin are closely allied, but they are perfectly distinct facts. Error is seated in the intelligence, and sin is the act of the will.

Difference between error and sin.

I will define sin by this familiar citation: "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." Sin is the violation of known law, the revolt of the will against the power and authority of conscience. But it is important to observe. that when the law is not known to us it may be because of our own fault. If our ignorance is owing to our own neglect, we are responsible for it. He who violates a law, of which at the moment he is ignorant, sins nevertheless, in case it is himself who has shut out the light from his conscience.

* Xenophon's *Memorabilia.* † *Hippolytus.*

Such is our characterization of sin. As to the thing itself, we know it only too well. There is perhaps no one who, without thinking back very far over the past, will not recall cases when, in the full light of conscience, he was conscious of a perversity of will. To have defined sin is to have shown that it is an evil, since it is a revolt against law, and therefore ought absolutely not to be.

As we know the essential nature of the moral law, we know also the essential nature of sin. This supreme law is that of charity, the consecration of each to the good of all. The essence of sin is the contrary of this law, that is, the disposition to live only for self. Egotism, in the full and etymological sense of the word, is the root of all sin. Instead of remaining at his place in the general order of things, in his true relation to the rest of the universe, the individual makes himself the center of all, subordinates every thing, as far as in him lies, to himself—like a little planet or mere fragment of a planet that should try to be the sun.

The root of all sin is egotism.

This excessive seeking of self, the common ground of all moral disorder, is manifested under two principal forms. On abandoning his true place, man either descends, animalizes himself, falls into sensuality, and thus forfeits his claim to membership in truly spiritual, elevated society; or, on the other hand, he attempts to rise above the place which his relative dignity

assigns to him; in a vain hope to rise, he precipitates himself into the abysses of pride. Sensuality and pride are the two chief forms of egotism. And as it has two forms, so has egotism also two degrees. The first is that of the indifferent, who, turning aside, is ever ready to ask, "Am I my brother's keeper?" The second is that of him who is wicked positively, and who crushes others for the gratification of self.

The two forms and two degrees of egotism.

To define sin is, I repeat, to prove that it is an evil, since it is the violation of law, the contrary of what ought to be. But it will not be so easy to prove as much of suffering.

Though it is easy enough to excite the human heart to protest against suffering, it is quite another task to demonstrate to reason that suffering ought not to be. For it has in fact numerous and powerful apologists. Let us examine this line of thought.

What is it that develops manhood? Energy. What generates energy? Active resistance. What calls forth this resistance? Suffering. Eliminate from human life all suffering, and you suppress all contest, all development of energy — you have a creature devoid of all moral vigor. How salutary an influence in calling forth character has often resulted from the most dreaded scourges! Some time since a friend wrote to me from Zurich at the

Apologists of suffering.

time the cholera was there raging. He said that while the scourge had given occasion to many exhibitions of selfishness, yet, on the other hand, it had called forth so much moral courage, so much devotion, so much disinterested sacrifice for the good of others, so much forgetfulness of the distinctions of social rank under the impulse of the noblest and purest of sentiments, that for no consideration could he think of wishing that the ravages of the disease had not fallen upon his native city. And this was the head of a family; and he wrote to me at a time when the scourge was yet menacing himself and his friends. It is, therefore, possible to pronounce a eulogy on epidemics.

Apologists of war.

And war! What has not been said in its favor? Does not war give fortitude to character? The comforts of peace—do they not lead to effeminacy? And in general, do not public calamities have a manifestly salutary effect? Though some may be driven *from* tender thoughts and from God by experiencing and seeing suffering, is it not more frequently the case that bereavement and sorrow lead *to* God and to holy thoughts? Is it not the fury of the tempest that brings the otherwise godless sailor to his knees and to prayer? And are not the most terrible convulsions of society often fruitful of great moral ameliorations? These thoughts are, in fact, so widely prevalent in society that there is scarcely a

modern poet* who has not strung his lyre, and manifoldly sung of the blessed effects of trial and suffering—of the baptism of tears, of the sweet that springs of the bitter.

And suffering has not only its apologists, it has its devotees. I will not enlarge on the incredible macerations with which the ancient Brahmins tortured their bodies. In our own day, and in our own frivolous and pleasure-seeking society of Europe, there are still men who voluntarily, and often after having thrown aside wealth and power, are submitting themselves to the law of toil under conditions of the most extreme poverty. Devotees of suffering.

Have you ever heard of the Trappists? Last year I visited a convent of this order, near Mulhouse in Alsace; and never perhaps did I experience a more lively sense of contrast. On the one hand there was the noisy, bustling, manufacturing Mulhouse, with its prosperous, philanthropic and, consequently, happy

* Take as an example this:

L'homme est un apprenti, la douleur est son maître,
Et nul ne se connaît tant qu'il n'a pas souffert.
C'est une dure loi, mais une loi suprême,
Vieille comme le monde et la fatalité,
Qu'il nous faut du malheur recevoir le baptême,
Et qu'à ce triste prix tout doit être acheté.
Les moissons pour mûrir ont besoin de rosée;
Pour vivre et pour sentir, l'homme a besoin de pleurs.

ALFRED DE MUSSET.

population—Mulhouse, with its riches and luxury, its culture and general comfort; and, on the other, there stood close by, the vast, chilly, silent barracks, we may say, of the Trappists, where, even in the rigors of winter, fire is never kindled, save in the lamp of the altar and in the hurried preparation of their scanty food. And the oppressive silence of the sepulchral place is broken only by the hum of toil or the songs of worship! At this very hour of the evening they lie there stretched upon boards, and seeking sleep after the hard toil of the day. At two o'clock in the morning they are awakened by the bell, and called to prayer. On the morrow, they will labor in the fields and workshops till ten o'clock before tasting of food. To refreshen their forces they will then be served with a glass of beer, and a ration of bread and of vegetables gathered from their own fields. And the repast of the evening will be but a repetition of this. On festive days they receive in addition a piece of cheese.

In comparison with these men, the most pinched of our day-laborers leads the life of a capitalist. I express no opinion as to the value of these monastic institutions; I cite them merely as an example of a class of men who seem as zealous in seeking privation, as we in the pursuit of pleasure; who seem, in fact, to ask nothing at the hands of the world but the austere delights of suffering. Voluntarily they

deprive their bodies of nourishment to the last possible limits; they deprive their minds of aliment by silence; and, what appears almost terrifying, they cut off their heart from its natural source of life by the absolute rupture of all bonds of family and of all social affections.

This will suffice to illustrate our remark, that suffering has not only its apologists, but also its devotees. Now, in the face of the arguments of its apologists, and of the practice of its devotees, does not our thesis, that suffering is an evil and ought not to be, seem to be very far from established? Let us first understand each other.

It is easy to prove that, under the conditions of our actual experience—note these words: *of our actual experience*—suffering is inevitable, and even that it is good. But how is this proved? All the arguments used for this purpose may be reduced to three.

Three favorable phases of suffering.

First: Suffering is a warning of the presence of disorder. If you were sick without knowing it, without having an idea of the evil, you would not seek for a remedy. So also when the body politic experiences troubles or sufferings, more intense than ordinarily, it is admonished to search out the locality of the disorder, and to correct it by one of those remedies which, in politics, are called reforms. To be admonished of a disorder in order that it

It is a warning.

may be repaired, is useful and good. Who can deny it?

It is a remedy.

Second: Suffering is a remedy. From the amputation of a limb, which will perhaps save your life, to some misfortune that may befall you while under the influence of a culpable passion, and thus awaken you to serious thoughts, suffering is of most wholesome effects; and no one can refuse to say with Fénélon: "Who can call evil those pains which God sends us to purify us and to render us worthy of him? That which does us so much good cannot be an evil." Suffering purifies us, is very necessary to us; hence, it is good.

It is a punishment.

Third: Suffering is a punishment. Punishment is an incident of justice, and justice is good. Have you never, while in the presence of some odious crime, felt rise within your heart a voice calling for justice? And criminals also sometimes hear that voice. There have been among such as were condemned to death those who would have refused a pardon, for the reason that, their consciences having been made tender, they felt that they ought publicly to expiate their crime. Justice is good, and, despite the mysteries of the subject, we can conceive that justice in the full sense of the word is perfectly consistent with goodness; that it is, in fact, only one of the forms of love. The moral law expresses and exacts only that order which is essential

to all spiritual society. To permit the violation of the moral law without vindicating its rights by punishment, is to sacrifice the interests of all to an indulgence toward the few, which is nothing else than a weakness. To maintain the law by punishment is to protect the interest of all against the disorder of a few; it is the work of goodness directed by wisdom. In the form of punishment, therefore, suffering is necessary; in this respect also it is good.

All candid apologies for suffering seem to fall under one of these three arguments. Certain obscure statements, however, have also been used for this purpose. We will notice them in passing.

A free being, with an object to attain, must necessarily desire it, and make efforts to realize it. It is affirmed that all desire is the result of privation, and presupposes, consequently, a suffering; and that all effort is painful. Suffering appears, therefore, to be the necessary condition of liberty, inasmuch as, if suffering were suppressed, there would exist neither desire, nor effort, nor, consequently, any exertion of free activity.

Desire and exertion are not *per se* suffering.

The bases of this reasoning are not solid. A desire conjoined to the hope of its realization may, in fact, be a most pleasant feeling; as, for example, all who have a good appetite and the means of gratifying it, very well know. For those who are physically and morally healthy, effort, far

from being painful, is one of the purest joys of existence. A young man, with the health and the will for it, is far from suffering while playing his muscles in ascending a mountain. Desire becomes suffering when it is deprived of satisfaction and hope; effort becomes pain when the means of action no longer respond to the will; but all desire is not suffering, and all effort is not pain. The action of a free being does not invariably presuppose pain. It is important to avoid such confusions of thought as would imply that suffering is necessary.

As to the arguments in favor of the usefulness of suffering, they are sound, and I accept them all. In affirming that suffering is an evil and ought not to be, I would not be understood to counsel parents to take from the path in which their children tread all the thorns, or to deprive them too largely of the benefits of the rod. I do not counsel generous hearts to alleviate inconsiderately all suffering, and never to allow free course to the penal consequences of idleness and sensuality. I do not counsel judges to set free without punishment the thief and the assassin. On the contrary, it seems to me that the judge who absolves the malefactor who has forfeited his rights to the liberty of society renders himself in some degree an accomplice in the new crimes which he commits. Such a judge forgets that justice on the part of the civil power (the chief ob-

Suffering not always to be prevented to the utmost.

ject of which is to further the public good by repressing the disorders of the few) is a mercy, and feebleness a cruelty. And above all, would I not be understood as counseling any one to attempt to quench, in souls tormented with a sense of their sins, the pains of repentance and the salutary bitterness of remorse. In the world, in its actual state, pain has a great mission, as it has a large place. It is sometimes our duty to let it run its course, and the highest charity often requires that we become the rigorous ministers of justice.

Suffering is, therefore, of healthful influence. It may be good; and if, for all that, it ought not to be, still this is not true in an absolute sense, as it is of sin. It may be the means to an excellent end; and the maxim that the end justifies the means, though severely to be excluded in regard to moral duty, may nevertheless find here a legitimate application.

Having said this, let us now examine the basis of the argument offered by the apologists of suffering. Warning, remedy, punishment, all these words presuppose disorder; they place the necessity of suffering in a bad condition of things. All the arguments in justification of suffering are based on our actual abnormal condition. In the midst of such a condition, where the natural order of things is broken, it is easy to prove

Suffering good only in an abnormal state of things.

that warning is desirable, that punishment is good, and that a remedy is beneficent. But suppose once that all things are in a state of order, and you can find no place for suffering. Pain is not nutriment, it is a medicine; and in a condition of health, remedies are not good. Now, as pain would have to vanish as soon as things should be as they ought to be, it is very clear that, in an absolute sense, it ought not to be, and, hence, that it is an evil. And if it is inevitable that in this world we must suffer, it is quite evident that the world is not in a condition of order; for God, who created our heart, did not create it for suffering.

The heart not made for Stoicism.

If we could be convinced that pain is good in itself, and in an absolute sense, the most disinterested of the functions of our hearts would be materially paralyzed; pity would be quenched. A philosopher of antiquity, while tormented with the gout, is said to have cried out, "Pain, thy efforts are useless; thou wilt never force me to confess that thou art an evil!" This is a proud declaration, and when made of one's self, of one's own actual sufferings, it is sublime. But in the presence of the sufferings of others the heart will ever exclaim, "Philosopher, thy words are in vain; thou wilt never induce me to admit that pain is not an evil."

Do you need another argument to prove that suf-

fering ought not to be? Here is one which seems to me unanswerable. What is the supreme law of practical life? The law of charity. *Reductio ad absurdum.* But charity, if it would not do more harm than good, if it would not counteract the salutary working of pain, must be of masculine temper. Now charity is essentially gentle and mild; its mission is to produce ultimate happiness, and, until that point is gained, to alleviate as far as possible all suffering. Its end is to produce a state of society where all shall be order, where there shall be no more tears, nor mourning, nor lamentation. This being unquestionably the end of charity, it would follow, on the assumption that suffering is good, that the supreme law of duty would tend to work the diminution and destruction of the good, which is absurd. If charity, therefore, is the law of the good, then suffering ought to be destroyed, ought not to be, and consequently it is an evil.

I conclude: error, sin, and suffering are disturbances of the true order of things, are evils, and our mission is to remedy them. This seems almost as clear to me as a theorem in geometry.

III. The Negation of Evil.

Human society presents a very strange spectacle. How many of the faces we meet on our streets are haggard and sad! how many of the heads, bowed with care and trouble! As soon as *Practical admission of evil.*

the early ardor of youth is dampened, and age has begun to destroy the illusions once indulged, it is exceedingly difficult to keep alive in men a hopeful faith in the good. There is too generally prevalent a deplorable lack of courage and hope, of confidence in the future. It is often difficult to induce men to believe that the passing clouds do not blot out the sun, and that none of our hazes have yet succeeded in destroying the eternal azure above them. Of all the wants of the human heart, none is felt more universally than the want of consolation. Such is the general condition of practical life.

But if we leave the beaten paths of real life, and enter the select circle of scholars and philosophers, every thing is wonderfully changed; the task which then is most difficult is, to demonstrate the existence of evil as against the affirmation that every thing is good. This may seem a strange statement, but a slight examination of the subject will show, that one of the chief currents of metaphysical thought in the past has constantly included the denial of evil. It has been so up to the present day. On several points of the intellectual globe there are signs, it is true, that a better future is beginning to dawn, but up to the present the results of philosophy have too often justly deserved the malediction of Isaiah: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil!" I am not here to pronounce woes upon

Speculative tendency to deny it.

any one, though I am convinced that, of all possible theories, that which denies the reality of evil is certainly the most pernicious in its consequences. My special task is to appeal to your reason, and show that this theory is false.

The negation of evil, or the affirmation that all is good, is in harsh contradiction to our natural sentiments. In its direct and unequivocal expression this doctrine, as I have said, prevails only in certain learned circles. An effort, however, becomes more and more apparent to popularize it, and circulate it among the masses, through journals and reviews; I have even discovered it in romances. Many of the inferior writers who retail it on their pages have little suspicion of its origin and true significance, just as, of the many who drink of a river, only a few know its fountains and meandering course.

The substance of the argument urged against the common views of evil is this: "In the eyes of the true *savant* all is good." But what does he say of what we call evil? He says, "It is a necessary incident of all existence. It is necessary, not merely in reference to the actual state of the world, not merely as a result of an abnormal condition of humanity; it is necessary primitively and absolutely, thus constituting a part of the nature of things and of the plan of the universe. Now, as evil is necessary, so it ought to be; and, as it ought to be,

The form of the denial of evil.

so is it good. There is, therefore, no evil; what we call evil is only one of the forms of the good. The existence of evil is an intellectual chimera, a mental disease, from which philosophy cures us."

Such is the kind of conversion to which we are recommended by a certain so-called science. The common sense of mankind, it holds, is in disorder; man must be converted, not by the destruction of evil, which does not exist, but by banishing from him the idea of evil. The argument is logical: if evil is necessary, it ought to be; if it ought to be, it is good. This is, in fact, our definition of the good. The reasoning, I say, is irresistible if we admit the assumption upon which it rests, but this is what we must now examine.

Let us observe at once that the question is, as to the positive denial of the reality of evil. In certain speculative writings you will find the arguments above stated under this heading, *Explanation of Evil.* But the word explanation is out of place; those who deny a fact do not explain it. Toward the close of the seventeenth century, if I mistake not, there arose a great discussion about a child which was born with a golden tooth. There was a great commotion among the physiologists. How was one to explain, from the known constitution of the human body, the production of a golden tooth? Some one finally settled the question by

A golden tooth.

examining the extraordinary child, and convincing himself that the golden tooth did not exist. But was this an explanation of the phenomenon? No; it was the suppression of it. The question now is, Can we as easily get rid of evil as of this fabulous tooth? is the true solution of the problem the denial of its object?

To come now to the heart of the matter: How is it attempted to prove that evil is necessary? It is proved first by a fallacious method. It is assumed that the processes of mathematics and physics are applicable to universal science. Thus are applied to the sphere of liberty those methods which are legitimately applicable only where no element of liberty exists. An axiom in physics is, that in matter there is no principle of spontaneity, so that the facts are always in conformity to laws, and there is never a difference between what is, and what ought to be. If this process is applicable to the moral world, it is only so applicable on the assumption that all that is ought to be, evil included. The necessity of evil is thus proved, by a method that takes that necessity for granted.

The fallacy of applying the method of physical science to the sphere of liberty.

But the argument returns. If evil exists, as conscience affirms that it does, then there is in the moral sphere a difference between what ought to be, and what actually is; the method peculiar to

physical science is, therefore, not the method of all science.

Again, the necessity of evil is proved by assuming the world under its actual conditions to be the measure of all that might be. In the present condition of our world, good and evil are so intermingled that to suppress the one would, it seems, amount to the suppression of the other. Thus, a world exempt from evil appears as little better than a purely Utopian imagination.

This reasoning is based on experience, but it is a very limited experience. In conceiving of a world free from disorder, and fully realizing the good, it is not true that we rush into the sphere of chimeras. To the experience of what actually is we oppose another experience, not less real, not less certain—the experience of the reason and of the conscience, which proclaim that which ought to be, and assure us that evil ought not to be. To establish the necessity of evil in the name of experience, is to forget the better and nobler part of experience.

Common experience opposed by a higher experience.

Finally, the necessity of evil is proved by a confounding of ideas, and it is to this point that I desire to direct your special attention. We must enter here into the darkest labyrinths of philosophy; but one sees clearly every-where if one is only provided with a good lamp, and the only lamp which you will need is a close attention.

The human mind possesses two perfectly distinct ideas: the idea of more and less, and the idea of good and evil. By confounding the more with the good, and the less with evil, it is made to appear that evil is necessary. But by carefully distinguishing these ideas we will restore to evil its true character.

The fallacy of confounding the more with the good.

Represent to yourself, if you please, the whole series of created existences, from the very lowest to the highest of all; or, to speak mathematically, conceive of the vast multitude of beings which occupy the space between zero, on the one hand, and infinity, on the other. Begin now at the lowest and gradually ascend the scale. As to matter, you will see a constant increase, both as to the space occupied, and as to the density and the richness of the forms. As to spirits, you will see gradually rising to higher degrees the power of the heart, of thought, and of volition. Thus you will have before you a conception of the hierarchy, or scale of dignity, of the universe. When you say the sun is more than the earth, life is more than matter, the being which thinks is more than the being which thinks not, you form judgments which we shall term *judgments of hierarchy*, or of dignity. Pascal has used this thought with telling effect on the page where he contrasts the being who thinks with the universe which would crush him, and on that in which he exalts

The hierarchy of being.

above the totality of all worlds and of all intelligence, the pre-eminent worth of charity.

Every being in its place in the hierarchy, or scale of existence, has a purpose, a destination, and it is good or evil according as it does or does not answer that destination. The judgment which we pronounce in this regard is a *moral judgment.* I call it moral even when it relates directly to inanimate objects, taking as granted what I have said in my first lecture, namely, that every phase of the good includes directly, or indirectly, the participation of a will. When you say a watch is out of order, or runs poorly because its different parts do not all fulfill their functions, (which implies at bottom a blame against the watch-maker,) you pronounce a moral judgment, and you do it as really and positively as when you say, envy is a wrong feeling, or theft is a culpable action.

Hierarchic different from moral judgments.

Now, the hierarchic judgment and the moral judgment are radically distinct. This truth is so weighty that I will adduce three considerations in its support.

Perfect goodness possible at any point in the scale of being.

First. The good may exist, and may exist equally, at all the degrees in the scale of being, for that which determines the degree of good is not the place which the being occupies in the scale, but its conformity to its destination. A village clock whose single rude hand marks only the hours, may be as perfect in its kind as the most

complicated repeater. The most humble duty faithfully performed is equal in the order of conscience to the most brilliant virtue. The child who, while under the hands of the dentist, represses the cry of nature in order not to call forth the frowns of its mother, may have a heroism equal to that of Winckelried when receiving to his breast the lances of Austria. Should we ignore this truth, should we confound the degree of the good with the brilliancy of the good, (which latter can exist only in exceptional conjunctures,) we would open the door to a glory-seeking vanity, and shut it to humble duty-fulfilling conscientiousness.

Evil possible in the highest as well as in the lowest.

Second. Evil may exist at any and every stage of the scale of being. An archangel may be evil; a worm may be sick. If flatterers are a detestable and fatal environment for monarchs, it is simply because they encourage in them the sentiment that their elevation exonerates them, in some sort, from the obligations of moral law, and that they are limited only by their own good pleasure.* Doubtless Louis XIV. believed, unconsciously, it may be, that what would be culpable in the simple citizen was right enough when it was the Great King who did it; and the lesson which Racine gave him in some of the fine verses of *Athalie* was, very likely, in place.

Third. There may be more good in the inferior de-

* Qu'un roi n'a d'autre frein que sa volonté même.—ATHALIE.

grees of the scale of being than in the superior degrees. The widow's mite was less in the scale of intrinsic worth than the alms of the rich; but it was declared greater in the moral scale. Epictetus, if he was as good as his books, was one of the best men under the sun; but he was a slave, and stood quite at the bottom of the social hierarchy; while Nero, who was master of the world, has left an accursed name.

Higher good possible at a lower stage in the scale.

The hierarchic judgment and the moral judgment are, therefore, profoundly distinct. And yet they may be harmonized. In separating them we attain to a part of the truth; but it is only in bringing together that which at first we distinguished that we reach the whole truth. The hierarchic and the moral judgments approach each other in the idea of progress.

That progress is a good, is one of the most generally and readily accepted truths of this epoch: in fact, it is only too readily accepted, inasmuch as many incautious minds are thereby led to welcome every novelty as an improvement, and every change as a progress. Progress, in the sense of development, is the law, the final cause of whatever exists. In that an object develops itself it realizes more and more its destination; it rises from less to more; it rises from zero and approaches the plenitude of being. In the idea of progress, there-

In progress are harmonized hierarchic and moral judgments.

fore, are intimately harmonized the law of the hierarchy, which expresses the passage from the less to the more, and the moral law, which requires that the passage from the less to the more be effected.

But the two ideas, though harmonizing, are none the less distinct, inasmuch as progress does not consist in the fact that a being passes out of its own order and nature to become a different nature, but in the fact that it realizes fully its own peculiar nature. The gardener who wishes to improve a rose does not try to make a camellia of it; the shepherd who wishes to improve his sheep does not aim to make goats of them; and it is quite conceivable that a young woman might be perfectly developed and accomplished without, for all that, being made into a man—or even into a political elector.

Progress is not metamorphosis.

The good may, therefore, exist at every degree in the scale of being, if only each being fulfills its own special function. A limited power may be as good as a greater power, for the good does not consist in the quantity but in the direction of the power. Every thing may be good, perfectly good, in its place, without in the least leaving its natural sphere. There is only one thing which can never be good, and that is, evil; for evil is disorder, and disorder has no legitimate place.

In the sphere of progress every thing may be good, perfectly good, if only at each moment of duration it

develops itself in such a manner as to realize the capabilities of its own nature. True progress consists in rising from zero and tending toward the plenitude of existence; and the evil never lies in the distance which separates a being from its ultimate end, but in the fact that it has not advanced as it should have done, or that it has taken a false direction.

Simple non-development is never an evil.

Let us now return more directly to the subject in hand. In order to establish the necessity of evil, the more is confounded with the good, the less with the evil, the hierarchic judgment with the moral judgment; and then it is argued: Without the less and the more there would be no hierarchy (scale of being); without the hierarchy, no diversity; and without diversity the world would be impossible. The less, which is the evil, is, therefore, the condition of the existence of the world; hence it is necessary.

This metaphysical reasoning is generally presented in the following form: There is but one infinite being, God; whatever is not God is limited; this limitation is the evil; what we call evil is simply the distance which separates us from the Infinite, that is, it is the portion of nonentity which yet clings to us. If there were nothing but God, there would be no world; it is an essential condition of the existence of the world that it cannot be infinite; therefore, it must contain evil. To demand

Statement of argument in denial of evil.

that there should be no evil is to demand that nothing should exist but God. Evil is only the imperfection inherent in all finite being; and as all that is not God is finite, imperfect, therefore evil is necessary. With these arguments a fraction of the skeptical world seems to triumph; and they triumph all the more as they exclaim: How could there be progress if there were no evil? Progress consists in the fact that an object develops itself, passes from imperfection to an imperfection that is less, that is, from evil to good. To suppress evil would therefore be to suppress progress, which all admit to be a good. Evil is, therefore, a condition of the good—constitutes, in fact, a part of the good.

I trust you already fully see the confusions of thought on which all this scaffolding is based. To be good it is not necessary to be God; it suffices that we be at the place in the hierarchic scale which God has assigned to us, and that we fulfill the duties which he has prescribed for us. That progress which removes us from evil is not progress proper; it is a restoration; and restoration presupposes disorder. Where there was no disorder progress would not consist in getting rid of evil, but in getting rid of non-development, of nonentity, and in realizing ever more and more the plenitude of our being.

It rests on a confusion of ideas.

This confusion of thought, by which the hierarchic idea is confounded with the moral idea, evil with im-

perfection, and progress with getting rid of evil, leads to deplorable consequences. If all finite being is evil, and evil in the proportion of its distance from the infinite, then all created beings are predestined to evil, and to evil more or less great according to their relative place in the scale of being; such a doctrine is horrible.

Its absurd practical consequences.

Note, now, some of the inferences in which you involve yourselves by holding that the development of a being, its progress, consists in passing from the evil to the less evil, to the good. Have you never, of a fine June day, plucked from the hedge, or on the hill-side, a branch of eglantine? Perhaps the flower that was as yet closed attracted you more than the fully opened one. A bud is a flower in process of development, an imperfect flower. But has it ever occurred to you to regard a bud as only a poor flower? Behold that pretty child, whose mere presence is the joy of a whole family, whose least resemblance of a half-articulated word calls a smile of bliss from its mother, and whose first attempts at stepping are rich entertainment for a whole company. That child is a man in process of development; it is an imperfect man, in the sense of *incomplete;* but has it ever occurred to you to regard a child as a poor, a bad, man? The thought is absurd.

But we cannot dismiss it as a mere trivial absurdity that needs but to be mentioned to be rejected; it is

gravely propounded and defended in pretentious tomes of metaphysics. We, therefore, will examine it a little more closely.

Some of our contemporaries have claimed as a triumph of what they call modern science, the doctrine that all is good. To obviate this anachronism I extract this formula from a Greek writer of the Alexandrian school. "Without the existence of evil," says Plotinus, "the world would be less perfect."* And that we may have no doubt as to his meaning he expressly mentions "wickedness" as one of the elements that contribute to the perfection of the universe. The sense of the doctrine is, that what we call evil is only a phase of the good, a primitively and eternally necessary element of the universe. All the errors that have obscured and still obscure the human mind; all the sorrows that have rent the human heart, and still drape it in mourning; all the crimes which cause us to shudder; all the meannesses which disgust us with society; all this,

It is of ancient date.

* "Must we, then, regard as necessary the evils which are found in the universe, and for the reason that they are the consequences of higher principles? Yes: for *without them the universe would be imperfect.* The majority of evils, or rather all evils, are useful to the universe: such are venomous creatures; but often we do not know what purpose they serve. Wickedness is useful in many respects, and may conduct to many good results: for example, it leads to happy expedients; it obliges men to the practice of prudence."—*Second Ennead*, Book III, chap. xviii.

according to this theory, is good; all this is but a condition of the general harmony. It is only our ignorance that finds any thing to object to in the march of the universe.

Without the existence of evil the world would be less perfect! Let us develop this formula. If the Mexicans had not annually immolated thousands of human victims on the altars of their gods, the world would be less perfect. If the Spaniards had not possessed themselves of Mexico by means of abominable artifices and unheard-of cruelties, the world would be less perfect. If so large a portion of mankind did not brutalize themselves with intemperance, the world would be less perfect. If Roman gladiators had not been accustomed (as discoveries at Pompeii show that they were) to satiate themselves with the infamous pleasures of debauch before butchering each other for the amusement of the populace, and if kindred practices in the higher walks of life had not been so largely prevalent, and if prostitutes did not swarm the streets of our cities, spreading disease and infamy, and tempting the innocent into the snare from which they themselves cannot escape, the world would be less perfect.

What the theory implies.

Let us continue to develop it. It was necessary, eternally necessary, that the negroes of America should not be enfranchised save by the drenching

of the soil of a continent with blood and tears. It was eternally necessary—in fact, it was a part of the divine plan of the universe—that Germans should strew the plains of Sadowa with the bleeding and mangled bodies of their brother Germans. It was necessary that there should be seen at the great Exposition of Paris so many new inventions in the art of slaughtering men, and that they should be universally admired as so many signs of modern progress. All these, and innumerable analogous facts, were necessary, and therefore good. Drunkenness and debauch are but incidental graces of society! The massacres of war are among the finest employments of human genius and power! If we could suppress the bagnio and the guillotine, together with the criminality which establishes and justifies them, there would be something lacking to the harmony of the world!

Let us pursue the development a step further. It is necessary that there should be falsehood and perjury, cruelty and assassination—necessary that there should be rich sensualists and rich misers, indolent lazzaroni and envious poor. And, worse still, when we turn aside from others and look into our own hearts, this theory requires us to believe that but for that sin that burdens our conscience, that fault which makes us blush when we are alone, that iniquity of darkness, the world would be.... I will not finish

the monstrous sentence. To prolong this development would be to insult the public conscience. Against the conclusions of an erroneous philosophy I appeal with confidence to the public heart, to the public conscience, and to common sense.

How possible to maintain such a theory.

But how is it possible, it may naturally be asked, that men with heads and hearts, intelligent and honest men, can maintain doctrines so monstrous in their conclusions? It is thus: These theorists dwell continually in the lofty region of metaphysical abstraction; they see things in grand outline and from afar, and never deign to descend to the commonplace sphere of experience and facts; they do feel, in fact, and seem sometimes to confess it, that the realities of life are not in harmony with their theories. And these speculations, which do not explain the ordinary facts of existence, are not applied even by their own authors to their own practical conduct. In their contact with the world and men, these philosophers, while maintaining theoretically that all is good, yet practically act and feel just as others. They blame whatever wounds their conscience, grow irritated at what opposes them, and, after having published a demonstration that whatever is is right, complain bitterly of those journalists who speak evil of their works, and still more so of those who do not speak of them at all. In spite of their

It is never acted out, even by its champions.

theories, therefore, they also form the moral judgments, *bad*, *worse*, *worse still*. For them, life and science are two very distinct things.

But this distinction cannot be admitted. We do not hold that algebraic formula for true which cannot be applied to real quantities, and which an engineer could not apply without committing a practical blunder. Nor is it any more safe to entertain a philosophical theory which can neither explain, nor be applied to, actual life.

True theory not absurd in practice.

The interest at stake here is of grave import; it is that of the human conscience. Two years ago a celebrated writer * declared in our city that the conscience is dead. But it is not dead; nor will it die soon, for its guardian is the Eternal. But, without dying, the conscience may become sick, and the theories I here combat are calculated to produce this sad result. When persons believe theoretically that evil is necessary, it is unavoidable that in practice they should not, more or less, tolerate evil, both in others and in themselves. The founders of speculative schools do not generally suffer the consequences of their own errors; for, as Leibnitz has observed, they are preserved by their very habits of study and thought from many of the temptations of life. Epicurus, the patron of voluptuaries, was a man of an almost austere sobriety. The Emperor Marcus Au-

* Edgar Quinet.

relius, though admitting, theoretically, the necessity of evil, does not seem to have experienced much inconvenience from a doctrine which was contradicted by his life, and often by his writings.

But the havoc is felt in the ranks of the disciples. The belief that evil is necessary acts on the will and conscience as a sort of fatal chloroform; and this deleterious action makes itself widely felt in the broad level of practical ethics. A minister of the Gospel, while exhorting a criminal whom he wished to lead to repentance, received this reply: "But what do you expect, sir? You know very well that none of us are perfect." This man confounded what we have called the hierarchic judgment with the moral judgment, and placed his acts to the credit of the imperfection inherent in every creature. And he was a double parricide, having murdered both his father and his mother! The example is extreme I know, but it is historical. But if this extreme culprit excused himself thus, we may well imagine what the less guilty may frequently do.

Immoral tendency of explaining away evil.

I believe in a profound harmony between conscience and reason; if, however, we must immolate conscience, let us, at least, not immolate it on the altars of sophistry. Let us look at the matter a little. You hold the doctrine that every thing is good. You cannot, however, deny that humanity possesses the idea of evil, and judges that there is evil in the world.

This judgment brings about many imprisonments, many executions, many complaints about the condition of society. You say, now, that this judgment is an error, that our complaints are poorly founded, and that you will set us to rights by teaching us the truth that every thing is good. In your opinion, then, we, the human race, are in error, since you undertake to correct our thoughts. Is not, however, this error itself an evil? It *is* an evil, even in your opinion, since you undertake to cure us of it. In proposing to us a remedy, you admit that we are sick. Now, if all were good, as you affirm, we would not be sick, the error of believing in the evil would not exist, and you would not have the trouble of destroying it. If your doctrine were true there would be no need of proving it so. The mere fact that you are obliged to undertake its defense refutes it.

An *argumentum ad hominem.*

Surely this is a strange and violent contrast, namely, that of humanity on the one hand, groaning under its miseries, and this of philosophy on the other, which proclaims that every thing is good. And to place the matter in its true light will be no easy task. On the one hand, it is necessary to prove the reality of the good in the face of the practical experience of so much evil; and, on the other, to demonstrate to men of reason the actuality of evil as opposed to its speculative denial. The fact is, that reason, even in its error, seems here to contain a partial expression

of the universal conscience; its verdict is in the direction of what ought to be, while experience reveals to us simply that which unfortunately is. But how is it that that which is, is not in harmony with that which ought to be? This is, in fact, the very problem we are discussing; it cannot be solved, however, by denying one of its terms. The world is what it is; ideal speculations cannot change the nature of things. You may place the crown of orange on the brow of a guilty woman; you may write on the back of a justly condemned culprit, *honor* and *virtue;* but you will restore, neither to the one her purity, nor to the other his innocence. The evil is there; and you may vainly say, It is good; you cannot believe it, and your faltering accent will not unfrequently betray your inward conviction.*

Evil is in the world. Let us not merely confess it; let us proclaim it aloud. The denial of evil is fraught with terrible consequences. The affirmation that every thing is good is absurd and blasphemous. And, whatever certain philosophers may say to the contrary, the world in its history, and in its actuality, is full of errors, of sins, and of sufferings. If we say the good is already realized, we thereby forbid our-

* Vous criez: *tout est bien*, d'une voix lamentable.
L'univers vous dément, et votre propre cœur
Cent fois de votre esprit a réfuté l'erreur.
Il le faut avouer, le mal est sur la terre.—VOLTAIRE.

selves to conceive of any thing better than that which is; we incapacitate ourselves for forming any ideal higher than the prosy reality about us. To say that there is nothing to look for higher than an order of things similar to that which we know, is to deprive ourselves of all hope, and to quench the instinctive aspirations of our heart. To affirm that the world is not in disorder is to blindfold reason, for reason conceives of a better order of things than that of this world. To maintain, even by remote implication, that sin is not evil, is to outrage the conscience, and to do all that is possible to extinguish it.

With what have we to do here, then? With systems, with theories, that conflict with—what? With the voice of God speaking from the depths of our nature; for it is the Author himself of our constitution, who prompts us to call evil, evil; who enjoins us to combat it, and who causes to dawn in the orient of the soul a blissful confidence in the good. It is consequently a contest of pseudo-sages against God and humanity. Voltaire, therefore, though so often in the wrong, was grandly in the right when he said, "Our hope is that one day all will be right; to say that all is now right is a delusion; theorists may blind us, but truth is truth."*

* "*Un jour tout sera bien*, voilà notre espérance;
Tout est bien aujourd'hui, voilà l' illusion.
Les sages me trompaient, et Dieu seul a raison."

LECTURE III.

THE PROBLEM.

THE good, being the fundamental plan or order of the universe, evil is a disturbance of this plan, a disorder. Whence springs this disorder? How has it come to pass that that which ought not to be, is? How is it that that order which expresses the will of the Almighty is not realized? Such is the problem that we have to solve. But first it is necessary to define distinctly the spirit, the scope, and the limits of this discussion.

The precise aim of these lectures.

It is not my intention to investigate the history of evil, the manner in which it transmits, reproduces, and perpetuates itself; I am searching for its origin, its cause. When one of your neighbors gives you bad advice, and you follow the advice, this is an occasion for evil to manifest and increase itself, but it is not its cause, its point of departure. The accepting of the evil advice presupposes a principle of evil in him who gives it, and a capacity for evil in him who receives it. A temptation from without is a temptation only because it awakens an echo within the soul. And for this reason, the question as to primitive man's having been tempted by a fallen

angel—certainly a very grave and solemn question—does not enter into the scope of our lectures; it belongs to the history of evil, but does not bear on our search for its origin. Suppose that a naturalist should succeed in proving that the germs of life were deposited in our planet by its coming in contact with another celestial body; this fact would be important as bearing on the history of life, but it would throw no light on its origin. So is it also with the question which occupies us.

We ask, Whence originates evil? The tempter offered man an occasion for committing it; this presupposes that the tempter was evil. Man yielded to the appeal of the tempter; this presupposes that the germ of a temptation existed in him. How came it that there was a germ of temptation in man? Whence is it that the tempter was evil? The question is driven back, but it is not solved. Nor does it remedy the matter to assume that the tempter was evil by nature, for this would be to admit the ancient doctrine of *dualism*, namely, that there exists along with the good principle an eternal evil one. This doctrine under its religious form prevailed among the Persians; in its metaphysical form it prevailed among the Greeks, and is yet found in a few modern works. But the history of religion and philosophy shows that reason has ever striven to free itself from dualism as well as from polytheism, and to arrive at the concep-

tion of a single principle of the universe. Religious dualism prevails no longer, save in a few relatively obscure sects. And it is owing to the too predominant influence of Greek philosophy that there are yet traces of philosophical dualism in modern metaphysics. Since the establishment of the Christian system, the idea of the existence of two eternal principles has fallen outside of the great current of human thought. And the study of logic abundantly accounts for the fact; for a close observation of the process of thought shows that it is a fundamental tendency of reflection to seek for unity as the basis of the multiple. We cannot, strictly speaking, demonstrate the unity of the essence of the universe, for this unity is the basis itself of reason, and the common ground of all demonstration. The assumption that there is an eternal principle of evil will, therefore, be passed by in these lectures, as already condemned, both historically and logically, by the simple fact of the development of the human mind in self-acquaintance.

Dualism needs no refutation.

We will examine, to-day, some deceptive solutions, which seem to resolve the question of evil, but do not do so in fact; after which we will state an incomplete solution, which, while partly true, does not account for all the facts. We will then determine what are the general characteristics of evil, so as to state, in closing, the true position of the

General heads of the third lecture.

question. The points in our lecture will, therefore, be: Deceptive Solutions, Incomplete Solution, Characteristics of Evil.

1. *Deceptive Solutions.*

The solutions which I call deceptive have all of them the same general character. They stop at the occasions which permit evil to manifest itself, and at the agents which propagate it; and they lead into error those who think to have found its real source, its true origin.

Some, for example, think to have resolved the problem by saying that the body is the source of evil; that the spirit, though good in itself, is vitiated by its union with matter. It is very true that the body is the occasion of many evils; it is the recognized seat of the sexual passions; and a careful study of the relations of the physical and the moral may even lead us to admit that the bodily organs are the seat of all our passions, even those that have not physical enjoyment for their object.

These considerations have an important bearing on the history of the manifestations of evil; they are useful for practical life, indicating the means of ameliorating our moral condition by a wholesome discipline of the body. But they furnish no answer to the question as to the origin of evil. The body *per se* is not evil; we can readily conceive of a body

free from disorder, a spiritual body, that is, one serving as an instrument to the spirit, instead of debasing it to depraved appetites. After determining the physical seat of our propensions, it remains to be determined why the relations between our soul and body are such that the body uniformly oppresses the mind. The essence of the problem is, therefore, untouched.

The body is not evil, nor the cause of evil.

We will now examine, in more detail, another deceptive solution, namely, the theory which places the origin of evil in social institutions. This doctrine exists in germ, and more or less obscurely, in a great number of minds. It is reduced to systematic form in the notorious system of Charles Fourier. Establish phalansteries, say the Fourierites, allow social harmony to realize itself, and paradise will return to earth. The source of evil lies in existing institutions; good institutions will banish all the evils of which we complain; earth will form nuptials with heaven, and the laws which rule the stars will give peace to man.* So think these men.

Bad institutions do not clear up the origin of evil.

Without wishing to throw any ridicule on the Fourierite system, I will show, simply, to what ab-

* La terre, après tant de désastres,
Forme avec le ciel un hymen,
Et la loi qui régit les astres
Donne la paix au genre humain.—BERANGER.

surdity it leads. Parents complain much of the disobedience of children. A Fourierite, Victor Considérant, if I mistake not, has given an infallible prescription for drying up the source of these complaints. Never command children to do any thing but what pleases them, and they will always obey; that is to say, Give no commands, and you will suppress disobedience; abolish all forms of civil power, and there will be no more place for the evil of revolt. The solution is simple; but is it good? Let us examine it in its general bearing. What is the purpose of institutions in respect to evil? The question is important, and the truth will be found in the middle point between two errors, which it will be well to note.

A certain class of moralists say: "Men are every thing, institutions are nothing. Let the men be good, and all the institutions will be good; but if the men are bad, they will corrupt the best institutions." But this opinion is not strictly true. Institutions do good, and institutions do evil. In the family, for example, polygamy, or Roman divorce, (which finally reduced marriages to a mere transient concubinage,) are not matters of indifference. In society the institution of slavery is not of trivial import. It is true, if all slaves and all masters were perfect, a society might be happy even with slavery; but as slaves are not perfect, nor masters any more

But institutions are potent occasions of good or evil.

so, slavery is consequently far from being without influence on humanity in its present condition. Some time since a man sat with pen in hand, and about to sign his name to a public document. That single signature was going to transform into freemen twenty millions of serfs of the soil. Suppose some one had approached the Emperor of Russia at that moment, and said to him, "Sire! you are going to create great embarrassments; you will introduce very perplexing complications into the administration of your empire; you will have a fearful crisis to pass; and to what purpose, after all? What signify institutions? Let the masters only be good, and the serfs will be happy." And I doubt not that this reasoning was urged upon the Emperor Alexander more or less explicitly. But he did not heed it, and you will all agree with me that he did well. Liberal institutions develop in a people the sentiment of personal dignity; tyrannical institutions tend to degrade and brutalize men. Equitable institutions cultivate and develop the sentiment of justice; unjust institutions give rise to discontent and revolt. There are pacific institutions which foster mutual good-will; there are military institutions which provoke hostility, hatred, and all the evil passions. It is never wise to oppose salutary reforms under pretext that men are every thing and institutions nothing. The errors of these theorists have unfortunate practical

consequences. In times of social conflict, conservatists make use of them in opposing desirable political ameliorations.

Institutions continually promote either good or evil; but they are evidently neither the root of the good nor of the evil. To attribute to them an absolute moral power, is an error into which politicians are apt to fall.

This error of politicians is taken advantage of by revolutionary passions; but it produces, together with the revolutions, also those bitter disappointments which nearly always follow them. It was thought to reach the source itself of the evil by changing the institutions; but it is seen finally, and with grief, that the evil re-appears under the new institutions, whatever they may be. Flatterers surround and degrade the throne of a monarch, and the enraged people overthrow the throne; but flattery reappears and addresses herself to the victorious people, and is sometimes as base, as perfidious, as fatal, as when she addressed a crowned head. Unprincipled revolutionists, who wish to get themselves into public employment, may reach their purpose through a political commotion; but disinterested patriots, who look to political changes for the destruction of all abuses, are always doomed to bitter disappointment, as some of the recent French revolutions have abundantly illustrated. A change of institutions may be advantage-

ous, or it may be the opposite; but the ultimate source of the evil is not in them. Back of the institutions lies human nature; and for this reason, those who say that man is every thing, are nearer the truth than those who look too exclusively to political institutions.

Back of institutions is the causative action of human nature.

Let us illustrate by an example. We hear much said recently of co-operative societies and associations. Though hardly capable of an opinion on the subject, I venture, however, to regard them as the aurora of a better future for our over-worked population. But it is very certain that if you establish co-operative idleness and prodigal associations, you will not obtain very brilliant results, either in regard to labor or economy. It is necessary, therefore, to labor for the reformation of men, and, above all, that each should strive to reform himself. One can never more plausibly work for public reforms than after having conscientiously wrought his own individual reform. Despite the fact that sometimes the best opinions come from those who have acted the worst, and thus discovered by contrast the advantages of the good, there exists, for example, a very natural prejudice against taking the opinion of bankrupts in financial reforms, and against following the advice of idlers in the organization of labor.

Human nature lurks behind institutions, and the best social organization will be paralyzed in its effect-

iveness when applied to bad men. Moreover, these institutions which are based on human nature, whence come they? They did not fall from the heavens like the leaves of the Koran; they spring from the life of humanity, and partake uniformly of the sentiments and desires of those who organize them. Their origin, however, is usually vailed in the clouds of the past. But there are some cases where we can clearly see it. For example, America has recently been drenched in blood for the destruction of slavery. But whence came this American slavery? We all know its origin, the perverse and covetous motives that led thereto, and its disastrous consequences and bloody end. And if we cannot say so much of every evil institution, it is simply because of the imperfection of recorded history.

Institutions a simple outgrowth of human nature.

Institutions do not actually create evil: in this regard politicians are prone to error; but institutions transmit and augment either good or evil. They are not, therefore, without influence, as some moralists erroneously assume. The error of both these classes of men may be readily illustrated. Suppose a man engaged in raising a stone with an excellent lever. The property of a lever is to transmit and augment force. Two passers-by stop and notice the man at work. The first says: "If one has arms sufficiently strong, there is no need of a

Two erroneous views illustrated.

lever; strictly speaking, the arm is every thing and the lever is nothing." This is the moralist. The other exclaims: "How great the improvements in modern mechanics! we will ultimately have such fine machines that there will be no more need of arms." So speaks the politician. But both are in error. Let us improve the machines, and also strengthen our arms, and then all will in fact go well; or, to translate this figure, let us sow and cultivate the germs of good, both in our own souls and in those of our neighbors, so as to produce men of intelligence and good-will. These men will, in turn, ameliorate the institutions; and these ameliorated institutions, putting into play more and more the principles of true liberty, justness, and charity, will in turn contribute to augment general intelligence and good will; and this enlightened public opinion will again give birth to still better institutions. Such is the practical consequence to which the above considerations lead. Let us now come more directly to our subject.

Bad institutions are agents for transmitting and increasing evil; but to make them the origin of evil is manifestly erroneous. And it will be easy to see that such is the case with various other analogous solutions of the problem of evil, which are met with in conversation and in books. They seize on the occasions which transmit and aggravate evil, and treat

them as if they were its ultimate source. Let us pass, now, to the incomplete solution.

II. An Incomplete Solution.

Order being the basis of the universe, how is it that disorder has come to exist? In order to create a true commencement there is need of a cause, a producing power—in a word, of liberty; for where no free cause intervenes, there there can only be a combination of that which already existed—strictly speaking, nothing can begin. Liberty postulated by evil. Liberty! this is the watch-word of modern society, but it is not that of modern science, nor of science in its general form. Science has always found it very difficult to admit the reality of liberty, and for this reason: Science seeks to rise from one idea to another by a series of reasons, each of which is the necessary result of the preceding. The scientific spirit has, in fact, from of old down to our own day, been formed chiefly by the study of mathematics and physics. The scientific spirit largely hostile to liberty. Now, in the objects with which physics and mathematics busy themselves there is not the least element of liberty. This is the source from which the most prevalent idea of general science has been derived.

Now, if science, as thus conceived, is the sole and universal science, then every thing in the universe is fatalistic, inasmuch as where logical necessity pre-

vails, there there is no place whatever for liberty. An atheistical *savant* said one day, "If God existed the chain of science would be forever broken." That is to say, when we come into the presence of the Supreme Will, and when, to the question, why such a thing is: it is answered, Because God has willed it, there, reasoning must stop in the presence of this free cause. This is why science has so much difficulty in admitting the divine freedom. God appears to it as a stumbling-block, severing the logical concatenation of its reasonings; but if God is embarrassing to science, man is none the less so. If there exists in man the least element of liberty, it must inevitably occur that, in some measure, the reason of his acts and conduct will lie in the decision of his free will. For, if all the actions of man could be explained by a chain of necessary reasons, there would be in him no element of liberty. If there is the least free element in man, then there is in human actions an element to which formulas, like those of mathematics, are inapplicable.

Scientists, therefore, who deny the divine liberty at the behests of science, such as they conceive it, are obliged to deny human liberty likewise, and to affirm that all the facts of human life are simply a pure mechanism. Thus they teach; but their teaching involves them in strange contradictions. Many men who hold this doctrine take

Theory contradicted by practice.

active part in politics, and figure in the ranks of the liberals. In their books of science they affirm that human liberty is a chimera, but in journals and in deliberative assemblies they are the champions of liberty. The consciousness of this contradiction, which they themselves cannot always suppress, will, doubtless, finally turn to the advantage of the truth.

It is surely an evidence of a fallacy somewhere, that the prevalent idea of science denies that there is liberty in this universe, whether in God or man. Man forgets himself in the contemplation of matter, and extends its mechanism to the spiritual world. As it may be said that exclusive pre-occupation with self is the essence of moral evil, so we may say that forgetfulness of self is the essence of great philosophical errors. It is only necessary to take into consideration the nature of moral and social phenomena, and to introduce into science the verdicts of consciousness, to be enabled to perceive at once that the act of volition is in itself an explanation, a sufficient cause of facts, and to be induced to admit that there are other elements of science than those of mathematicians and physicists; that is to say, to admit the reality of liberty. The denial of liberty would not permit the proposing of the question which we are now discussing, inasmuch as, if every thing were necessary there would be no possibility of a difference between that which

Occasion of the fallacy.

True science must admit the fact of liberty.

is and that which ought to be. But as soon as the idea of liberty is admitted, the problem of evil exists, and a way lies open for its solution. I shall now state and explain what I shall call an incomplete solution; I will then distinguish that part of it which I regard as true from that which I cannot accept.

Liberty a basis for possible evil.

Liberty implies the possibility of evil. That being which, in the presence of law, would not be able to execute it or violate it, to obey or disobey, would not be a free being. A free being is, by nature, capable of evil. To ask that a creature be incapable of doing evil is to ask that it be not free. Capability is the essence of a free being; power is, in it, the seal and image of the Almighty. Capability of evil is the seal of the creature; as, in fact, there exists only one will which is so identical with the good that to suppose it evil would be an absurdity for the philosopher and a blasphemy for the believer.

Mere volition the sole and sufficient first cause of evil.

If the creature revolts against moral law, this revolt has no other real cause than the mere volition which produces it. The possibility of revolt, which is implied in the idea of liberty, is in no wise the germ of actual evil. The cause of actual evil is, the free decision of a will to violate its law. To seek for any other cause is to deny liberty, and to misunderstand the very essence of moral phenomena.

The revolt of the will against its law is sin, the primitive form of evil. Sin, in its turn, produces error. If you deceive yourself it is always your own fault. Never affirm until you have clear evidence; in the absence of evidence suspend your decision, and you will never be deceived. Intellectual error results from the fault of the will, in leading the understanding to form hasty and rash judgments. Moral error is also uniformly the fault of him who commits it. If we do not take the trouble to read the law inscribed in our conscience we are guilty of negligence. If to justify our evil inclinations we invent sophisms to obscure the light we already have, we become finally incapable of discerning the law; but our ignorance of the law, if thus voluntary in its origin, cannot excuse us.

Sin the cause of error.

Sin having once produced error, suffering follows both the error and the sin. To this place belong the apologies of suffering which we have already discussed, and to which we now simply refer. As soon as the world is invaded by sin and error, suffering makes its appearance as warning, as remedy, and as punishment; it is then just and beneficent in its workings.

Let us sum up these arguments. The universe is based on order—an order which is the expression of the Divine Will. Evil originates in a misuse of liberty. The possibility of

Summary of the individualistic solution.

evil is included in the idea of liberty, it being impossible to conceive a free being, save God, who is not capable of evil. But liberty itself, what shall we say of it? Is it an evil? It is not only good, it is more than good; it is the necessary condition of all good, as it is the condition of the existence of a spirit. Shall we reproach God for having created spirits, that is to say, free personalities? "What!" exclaims Rousseau, "to render man incapable of evil, would we have him lowered to mere brutal instinct? No! God of my soul, I will never reproach thee for having made me in thine own image, so that I might be good, free, and happy, like thyself." Such is the solution which I call incomplete. Let us now make some distinctions.

The origin of evil must be looked for in the acts of created wills; this is the doctrine of all self-consistent spiritualistic philosophy. I accept and maintain this part of the solution. But the solution, moreover, supposes that the sole origin of evil lies in the individual exercise of volitions, and that all sin, all suffering, all disorder, are to be explained by the misuse which all and each of us have made of our personal freedom. This part of the solution I reject. It is the characteristic of that doctrine which I shall designate as *individualism*, and which I hold to be incomplete. We will discover its incompleteness on examining further the characteristics of evil.

III. Characteristics of Evil.

Evil, as presented to our observation, has two chief characteristics, its generalness and its essentiality. To these two phases of the matter let us successively devote our attention.

(1.) *General Prevalence of Evil.*

No one will deny the general prevalence of error. None of the sciences, save perhaps the pure mathematics, are developed simply by accessions to the truth already known, which would be their normal condition; but they are developed by refuting and overthrowing the errors, prejudices, false theories, and fallacious maxims which, from of old, have largely formed the general fund and current of human thought. This fact is so manifest that some philosophers, taking the general expression of that which is for the formula of that which ought to be, have assumed that it is a normal characteristic of intelligence to pass through error in order to arrive at the truth.

Generalness of error.

Nor will the general prevalence of suffering be denied. In this respect our every-day life is full enough of complaints. And if we consult that great oracle in which humanity testifies to itself of its own condition, I mean literature, we will recognize at once that its general background

Generalness of suffering.

is sadness. I do not forget that, from Anacreon down, there have occasionally been gay and merry songsters; these are, however, but rare and exceptional sounds mingling themselves faintly in the mighty and doleful chorus of human woe. The general verdict as to life is that it is sad; and, for those who lack a firm faith in the good, a faith which implies confidence in God and in immortality, this verdict is almost despairing. For example, take this unique citation, to which, however, it would be easy to add similar ones from the literature of all ages and countries. It is Cicero who says: "After the supreme happiness of not being born, and of avoiding the shoals of life, the most happy lot for every one who has come into the world would be to die on the spot, and escape from life as one escapes from a conflagration." But why shall I add more? my cause is already more than gained. It is less important to rehearse the sorrows of life, than to call to mind the blessings with which it abounds, and which we lose by our faults. Instead of complaining, it were well to resort more freely to the sources of happiness which are liberally opened to us. So, at least, we are abundantly taught; but when, after having been brought to reflection by age and experience, we finally give attention to this teaching, it too often only awakens in us a regret for joys which are no longer within our grasp, and thus adds another drop

to the ocean of human sorrow. Let us now notice the general prevalence of sin.

But first we must come to an understanding as to the sense of the word *law*, which we shall have frequently to use. What we call law, as to natural phenomena, is simply a general expression of facts. The law of gravitation, for example, expresses the general fact that bodies are attracted toward each other. In this order of things the facts are always in harmony with the law, as there exists in matter no principle of action, no caprice, no rebellion. But in the spiritual world law is a command, an expression of what ought to be; and, as a command, it addresses itself to free beings. The facts may be, or may not be, in accordance with the command. There are, therefore, laws which are a general expression of that which is, and others which are the expression of that which ought to be. The first are realized in nature: the second are proposed to free wills in the moral world. There may, however, be in the moral world laws expressive of the general character of facts; but these laws will not be absolute like those of nature; there will be, or may be, exceptions. For example, there are men who fast; but this does not annul the general law that man eats when he is hungry. There are mothers who murder their children; but this does not annul the general law of fact

What law is.

In the material world.

In the spiritual world.

that mothers nurture their children. Having made these explanations as to the nature of law, we must now ascertain what is the law of duty, or the command, then determine the law of fact, or the general usage, and thereupon compare the two classes of laws. If the law of facts is, with slight exceptions, in accord with the law of duty, we will say that the state of things is good. But if, in the large majority of cases, the law of facts contradicts the law of duty, then we will say that the state of things is bad. How is it now, in this respect, with mankind?

The sexes in their normal relations.

Let us begin at the beginning. A child is born. Let us pause at this phenomenon of birth. The reproduction of the race has been confided to an instinct which we have in common with animals. This instinct is associated with another, which is designed to safeguard the dignity of the person—shame; and it is placed under the protection of a law—the law of chastity. The law of reproduction leads normally to the union of the sexes under well-known moral conditions, and in view of certain ends and consequences. The condition is that the union of the bodies should be preceded and justified by the union of the souls, leading to a free and real consent: this is the part of the heart in the law of chastity. The end is the transmission of life, and the relation of the means to the end is readily seen; this is the part of reason in the law of chastity. The

consequence is the concurrence of the father and mother, which presupposes a lasting union in order that maternal tenderness and the sterner duties of fatherhood may co-operate in the physical, intellectual, and moral education of the child; this is the part of conscience in the law of chastity.

Now, is not this the moral law in the matter? I do not ask whether the law, in all the extent of its consequences, is difficult or easy of fulfillment in the present condition of our nature. The question is, Is this the law? is it possible for us to think otherwise? To settle this question soundly it were better not to regard it as a mere matter of practical morals, for morals imply a barrier to custom, and the passions are ever ready to invent sophisms to evade the application of moral rules. Let us examine, therefore, how mankind invariably reason on this subject when considering it otherwise than from a moralizing stand-point.

That free consent is the legitimate condition of the union of the sexes, no one doubts. The idea of violence excites horror; the penal code provides against it; and all constraint, whether material or moral, awakens reprobation and disgust. Free consent in the matter now before us is the most common of maxims, and lies at the basis of nearly all of our romances and poetry. As to the end, consult any treatise on physiology, and you will

These relations are generally and well understood.

see maintained without the least hesitation the distinctions of the functions which relate to the production of the species and the preservation of the individual. And as to the consequences, all economists assume that the bringing of children into the world implies the duty of providing for them, and civil law, as far as within its scope, becomes the partial organ of the conscience, and imposes on parents the obligation of nourishing and raising their children. On this subject Christian ethics has not so much introduced new ideas, as collected into a focus, and sealed with divine authority, that which, in the eye of reason, is the law of nature. This law, though often violated by practice, by institutions, and by maxims framed to justify them, has revealed itself more than is generally supposed to all those who have essayed to decipher the characters inscribed on the conscience and reason of humanity. Even in the darkest days of Roman decadence, at an epoch when morals were truly frightful, certain pagan authors explained, almost in their whole extent and rigor, the duties of chastity.

Duties of chastity known and defended at times of greatest corruption.

The law of duty is, therefore, known. But what is the law of facts? We repeat it, in the sphere of liberty there are no fatalistic laws. There are persons who resist the temptations of the flesh and remain pure. To doubt this is to inflict self-chastisement, self-contempt. In one of the most striking pages of

modern literature, Alfred de Musset, a sad victim of earthly passion, has depicted the tortures of the libertine, who, a prey to terrible doubts, confesses with anguish that he has culpably rendered himself incapable of believing in purity.

The law is not fatalistic. The steps to its violation are easily traced. A man under the influence of passion finds himself in the presence of the seductions of life; his conscience warns him, but he has not courage to obey it. A morbid curiosity leads him to attend spectacles which awaken his senses, leads him to entertain corrupt communications, or prompts him to read books which fill his imagination with impure images. A defiled imagination perverts his senses, vice is contracted, and the guilty one writes his sins to the score of nature; he, perhaps, even calls science to his aid to prove the necessity of the disorders of which he has rendered himself the victim. Lacordaire, a man who may rightly speak on this subject, as one who had struggled and conquered, says: "When we have not taken the pains to overcome our passions we console ourselves in our vices by declaring them necessary, and clothe in the mantle of science the testimony of a corrupted heart."

There is no fatal law consigning us to impurity; but what is the general fact in this respect, as exhibited in human life? Is it a general fact that

Prevalence of impurity.

infancy is perfectly pure, that youth is truly chaste, and that children brought up by irreproachable parents uniformly make exemplary husbands and wives? Examine your own life, and what you know of the life of others, and listen to the voice of history. Sin is very prevalent; nations violate the law of chastity without restraint, and the rulers of nations seem sometimes to employ their exceptional position and power only to hand down to remotest posterity the reputation of adulterers and debauchees.

The law is violated; but how it avenges itself! How many are the tombs prematurely opened by vice! how many constitutions undermined and destroyed! how many withered bodies! how many blighted intellects! You turn toward the fountains of life, and you see rise from them only the vapors of death. On this point we cannot have exact statistical data; but I do not think those in error who estimate that debauchery alone robs humanity of more vital forces than the combined ravages of war, pestilence, and famine. Such is one illustration of the prevalence of evil. It relates to the origin of life; let us now turn to another.

Ravages of unchastity.

When man is born he needs nourishment. Is the practice of mankind faultless in regard to this? The law of alimentation is well known. Food and drink look to the maintenance of the

Food and drink normally.

forces of body and mind. I have no sympathy with asceticism; there is here a means of sociality which should not be neglected. The family table is the place of reunion of father, mother, and children. When a friend joins himself to the circle, a few additions to the attractions of the repast is only a mark of cordiality, a sign of welcome, which cannot be blamed. And if on some natal or festive anniversary a moderate use were made of a generous liquid which cheers the spirit and contributes to the innocent joy of friends, there would be nothing to condemn. But it is evident that when excessive food fatigues and destroys the forces instead of repairing them, and when drink paralyzes the intelligence instead of promoting its normal exercise, then there is disorder, there is evil.

Now, what is the general fact in this respect? We do not speak of that open intemperance, of those habits of drunkenness which so ravage society. We ask, What is the general usage in regard to eating and drinking? The general fact is that there is excess; the truly temperate are the exceptions. In the majority of cases little daily excesses fatigue the organism, waste the forces, and gradually sap the sources of life. It is only too often that we see the animal kill the man, and finish by killing itself.

The abuse of food and drink.

But shall we continue our comparison of facts with

the law? Shall we pass to the laws of truth, of justice, and of charity? I need not enter into details; you all know only too many of them already. In the presence of law, the perfect law, how many are just? There are none, no, not one; an honest examination of the facts will prove not only that sin is general, but that it is universal. All, it is true, do not sin equally; crime, as well as virtue, has its degrees.* All do not sin against all the phases of moral law; but who does not transgress many of the precepts which constitute it in its totality? None; sin is all-prevalent. This is one of the truths which is least contested, especially when others are concerned.

Sin universal.

But we must here make an important distinction. There is a morality of the conscience which places us in the presence of God, the author of the law. But there is another morality, that of society. I do not speak of the corrupt morality of the world; I speak of a social morality which is good and legitimate, and which ought to be carefully encouraged. Society judges each of its members according to his acts, because it does not know his motives, and it judges the acts of each in their bearing on the rights of others. From this standpoint there are men who are honest; there are others who are less so, or not so at all; and these distinc-

Distinction of social from ethical morality.

* Ainsi que la vertu, le crime a ses degrés.—RACINE.

tions ought to be kept up. There are men who, when in society, may well move with downcast eyes, and who had even better not show themselves abroad at all; for some of their public acts have outraged the public conscience. But there are others who may well move among their fellows with upright countenance, and who have the right, and sometimes the duty, to rise up against outrage, and repulse with just indignation the assaults of calumny. If we ignore this distinction between the morality of conscience and that of society, we involve ourselves in contradiction and foster a morbid humility.

There are persons who may rightly claim from their fellows the title of honest men; but he who looks into his own conscience and compares himself with the absolute law, that which looks at the intention as well as the act, and which is not limited to mere social relations, will perceive in his heart all the germs of evil, and will be convinced that it was, perhaps, only the occasion that was wanting to have made of him an actual malefactor. While standing in the presence of a criminal and thinking over his history, have you never asked yourself whether, if you had been placed in the same circumstance, you would not also have become what he is, or perhaps worse still? Have you never conceived of yourself as in the presence of some great temptation, and, on asking what would have become

Social morality without deep root.

of you, felt the blood curdle in your veins? In this consultation of conscience, even those who pass for just among men will learn three things: thankfulness to God for having preserved them from the greater temptations of life, indulgence for their fellows, and severity for themselves.

We are all more or less involved in sin; but what shall we say of certain ones who imagine themselves without reproach? Shall we admit that they are exceptions to the common rule? If a man should declare himself without reproach, not only from a social stand-point, in that he has neither robbed, nor murdered, nor sworn falsely, but also in the deep moral sense of the word, then I should be tempted to go and consult his wife, his children, and his neighbors; and I would feel confident of learning many things to his disfavor, and, above all, that he was intolerably presumptuous and arrogant. When Jesus of Nazareth pronounced the parable commending the humble publican who smote his breast, and condemning the Pharisee who thanked God for his many virtues, he did so, not so much in the character of the Son of God, teaching us unknown truths, as in that of the Son of man, making himself the organ of humanity, and uttering the verdict of the universal conscience against these self-righteous hypocrites, who, from the sublime height of their imagined virtues, look

Plenty of Pharisees, but no real exceptions to the general sinfulness.

down with disdain on the corrupt masses about them.

The general prevalence of suffering and sin is only too evident; we may laugh at it or weep at it, according to the spirit that we are of, but it is certain that the world goes wrong. Now, whence is this universality of evil? The individualistic solution of the problem of evil doubtless appears to you already as very insufficient. That a free being should not always choose the good may seem natural; but that among the thousands and millions of human beings who have appeared in the world, every one, without exception, should have chosen evil and brought upon himself suffering, and that none should have uniformly chosen the good, this may not be absolutely and logically impossible, but it is assuredly very strange. Our most honest and profound conviction is this: Not only do we believe that no man has always chosen the good, but we believe that in the present condition of humanity an absolutely good man is impossible. No one thinks otherwise; and of this, I could ask no better proof than that given by the endless controversies which are raised and perpetuated by the question of the person of Jesus. Those who hold that he was absolutely good, argue without hesitation from his absolute goodness to his divine nature; while those who deny his divinity do not hesitate to deny, in consequence,

Humanity believes in the universality of sin.

the historical reality of his absolute goodness. We believe, also, not only that every human creature is affected by suffering, but that in the present condition of humanity the existence of a man entirely free from suffering is impossible. Finally, we treat as chimerical the idea of a man entirely exempt from error. We believe, therefore, that evil is inherent in human nature under the threefold form of sin, of error, and of suffering. This is what I call the *essentiality of evil.* In view of this phase of the question the individualistic solution will appear as manifestly false—I mean, incomplete.

Essentiality of evil.

(2.) *Essentiality of Evil.*

Evil is essential in humanity as it now exists; that is, independently of our personal faults, and of the sufferings which arise therefrom or from the faults of those about us, there is in all men, from the simple fact that they are men, an element or germ of suffering and of sin. Mark well that I say an *element* of sin, not necessarily implying actual sin.

It is easy to show that suffering does not arise simply from the individual abuse of volition, though this produces, in fact, a large part of it. Let us revert to the facts attendant upon the transmission of life. Before rejoicing from the fact that she has brought a man into the world, woman must suffer the pains of childbirth. And when the child

Inevitableness of suffering.

is born, what is the uniform herald of the fact? It is the cry of the infant. The groans of the mother cease only to give place to the wails of the new-born.

And how many infants are swept away almost at their birth! how many of their epitaphs might be, "It cried and then died!" Pitiable infant! what fault had it committed? And the mother—were the birth-pains the result of her own faults? Are they spared to the pure woman, and suffered only by the guilty? All suffer alike. In fact, so far as we can see, suffering seems to strike at hazard, and, with supreme indifference to individuals, to impose a tax on humanity at large. A portion of our sufferings does not belong to us as mere individuals, but as members of the race. The proverb is not without justification, that "to live is to suffer."

Let us pass to what we call the essentiality of sin. There exists in human nature an element of sin independently of the fault of individual volitions: such is our affirmation. But we must be well understood, for, sin being a quality of our acts, and every act being, as it seems, absolutely individual, it does not appear easy, at first thought, to understand that sin may belong not to our volition, but to our nature itself. It is for this reason that we use the expression element of sin, and we shall soon see for what reason. Volition, reason, and conscience do not constitute our entire spiritual nature. Volition

Essentiality of sin.

is not the sole origin of our acts. We are impelled and solicited by the tendencies of the heart.

"Heart" in its moral sense.

In a general sense, we designate as heart the spiritual organ of all our desires and inclinations, of every thing that leads us to action, from the most disinterested love down to the taste we may have for this or that article of food. When man suspends the action of his will-power, he acts under the mere impulsion of his propensions, and, as we say familiarly, he goes as his heart leads him. The heart constitutes, in a moral point of view, what we call a nature, a nature which lies at the base of the soul, and back of our liberty. In the presence of this nature the free will consents or resists; it can consent to the evil, it can resist the good. A large share of our responsibility consists in our consenting to, or resisting, the impulses of the heart. This moral nature which weighs upon our will forever, and tempts it to abdicate in favor of the heart—are we personally responsible for its peculiarities? Not entirely, as we shall soon see; though we are so partially, as must not be forgotten.

Nature and significance of habit.

The consequence of a wrong act is, that we are inclined to commit it anew, if some bitter experience or the power of repentance do not counteract the law of nature. This law is, that the repetition of an act increases our inclination to persist in doing it. Such is the mysterious effect of habit: the employment of our liberty confines itself, so to

speak, in grooves which originally proceed from ourselves. This is very evident, for example, in cases of intemperance. The man who began to indulge in drink in defiance of his conscience, and with a consciousness that he could and should resist it, becomes step by step the slave of the very misuse which he makes of his own will-power. Finally, after having devoted himself to evil for ten, twenty, or thirty years, so that his will has become incrusted in the preponderance of his appetites, he will openly declare that nature is stronger than he. And perhaps he will speak truly; but who, other than himself, has created this nature? Thus the past of liberty re-appears in the present of nature; though devoting ourselves voluntarily to evil at first, we finally become its unwilling slaves; we ourselves fabricate and rivet the chains of our own servitude. But this power of habit is equally effectual in regard to the good. To-day you accomplish a good action with effort—perhaps with heroic effort; to-morrow you will do it with less effort; finally you will do it without any effort. The practice of the good will have become easy to you; the employment of your liberty will have inclined your heart to the good, and the past of your liberty will re-appear in the present of your nature; that is, by the good employment of your will you will have built upon your primitive nature a new nature.

A help to vice and a help to virtue.

There is, therefore, in our actual dispositions a por-

tion which has resulted from the previous use of our liberty. But is that all? is there in our nature nothing other, and more, than what we ourselves, or others by their influence on us, have put there? Assuredly there is more; there is in us a primitive nature, dispositions which are born with us, as the etymology of the word *nature* itself implies. The personal nature of each individual is largely determined before the action of his will and the influence of his fellows by inclinations inherent in his organization, and which are transmitted to him by his family, his nation, his race. Nor is this all: below these special, hereditary transmissions lie the elements of human nature in general. In the harmonious growth of body and soul, the elements of this nature are developed and gradually disclosed to the eye of consciousness, until finally they constitute that totality of inclinations which we call the heart.

A personal and an impersonal element in our heart.

Now the heart awakens to life before the conscience. At the period when man, taking possession of himself, becomes a moral being—a point of time which varies much with individuals, and which in some cases seems almost never to arrive — the will finds itself in the presence of propensities of the heart. Now, it is in this sense that the "nature" of our soul may be said to be good or bad; it is in this sense that there can be an element of good or an element of evil essentially inhering in

Heart awakes before conscience.

human nature under its present conditions. Though sin, properly so called, presupposes a necessarily individual act of the will, still predispositions to evil constitute an element or germ of sin. Now, what is the condition of humanity in this respect? When a person comes into moral possession of himself, does he find himself, like the Hercules of the fable, called on to choose between the good and the evil, which stand before him under strictly equal conditions, the one at his right, the other at his left? Are the scales of the balance equally charged? This is the heart of the question. Very certainly the scales of the balance are not equally charged: the heart is inclined toward evil. It is true, we are not naturally inclined to crime: an inclination to assassination and to acts of a like nature is, happily, but a terrible exception. Crime is the accident of evil, the paroxysm of the malady, as heroism is the exceptional form of the good. The real question is: Which is the easier for us, in view of the whole extent of the law, vice or virtue? If our language is well formed, we need but propose the question to resolve it; for the word virtue signifies primitively force, and general usage stigmatizes vices as weaknesses. Let us prove that language is in the right.

Heart overbalances conscience.

In the development of human nature the lusts of the flesh have a manifestly abnormal influence. Every man, when desiring to fulfill the law of the spirit,

finds himself, in one respect or another, subject to the law of his members, without, however, being able to attribute to his own will—which is responsible only when it yields to the evil—the origin itself of the bad passions which tempt him. In his relations with others he may have a tender heart, and be affected at their sorrows, without, however, having a good heart. In general, therefore, can the human heart be called good in the deep sense of the word? Are we naturally inclined rather to the fulfillment of the law of charity? or to that indifference which takes no thought of others? or, in fine, to the spirit of arrogance which occupies itself with others only to dominate them? In order to recognize what are the facts in this respect, suspend for awhile the activity of your will, and give free course to your thoughts as association may call them up; this will be what we call a state of revery. In this state we lay aside the reins of self-control, and give ourselves over to the free current of human nature, as it exists within us. What is the general tenor of our thoughts and feelings in such a state? Heaven preserve me from denying that there is much of the pure and noble in the reveries of many young women and young men! Yes, our souls are visited by brilliant flashes and splendid gleams, but, alas! these gleams and flashes serve but too often to render the shadows more visible. What is the testimony of literature

Our tendency in revery.

and popular proverbs—mirrors in which humanity sees reflected its own inmost thoughts—in regard to the purity of our thoughts when unoccupied? Is it not that idleness is the mother of all the vices? Now, if idleness, which is simply a suspension of effort, generally occasions the undisciplined imagination to wander into impure scenes of vice and crime, it is quite evident that our nature is not good, and that we inherit from humanity in general, if not sin properly so-called, yet certainly a condition of heart which inclines us to wrong acts; that is, we inherit an element, or germ, of sin. "I am convinced," wrote Rousseau, "that there is no man, however honest he may be, who, should he always follow the dictates of his heart, would not soon become the worst of wretches."

Rousseau's opinion.

There remains yet a final question to propose. Is this evil nature which is within us, and which each can contribute to augment by his own voluntary acts, but which exists before the individual, simply the result of the accumulated faults of generations? The hereditary transmission of evil tendencies is an incontestable fact which of itself proves the insufficiency of the individualistic solution; but the mere fact of hereditary transmission, as observed in history, does not solve the problem. In fact, if our nature, such as it is, were simply the result of the accumulated acts of

Our evil nature not accounted for by hereditary transmission.

generations, we would naturally expect to find history presenting humanity as pure at its beginning, and as corrupting itself continually more and more by the faults of its members. It would be like a stream rising pure among the rocks of the Alps, and losing its limpidity as it gradually approaches the plains. But is it so? Does history show us a greater degree of good the further back it leads us? I do not speak here of religious traditions as to a pre-historic state, a Golden Age, but of history proper. The annals of all nations uniformly represent the earlier civilization as very defective; so much so that many have rashly inferred that the savage state is the primitive state of the race. And when we pass beyond the period of history into the period of legend, does the matter assume a more favorable phase? What is the state of morals as presented in the heroic age of Greece? How many sad parallels might we find to the stories of Clytemnestra and Agamemnon! Let us turn now to the sacred books of the Hebrews. Almost on the first page, we find the earth crying for vengeance for the blood of Abel. Turn over a few pages, and you have the fearful history of the cities of the plain. Lot escapes from the corruptions of Sodom only to become a victim of the disorders of his own family, and the incestuous father of the accursed races of Moab and Ammon. No, no; we do not find history presenting humanity as proceeding from a pure

source, and then degenerating little by little from the mere influence of individual volitions.

The individualistic doctrine is, therefore, insufficient. It does not account for the hereditary transmission of tendencies from one generation to another, and it is absolutely disproved by the presence of evil at the very outset of history. And, in fact, those who maintain this doctrine come finally to admit its insufficiency in spite of themselves. After having shown, and shown properly enough, the share of evil which results from the action of individual wills, they are forced to attribute the rest either to the influence of society, which is Rousseau's theory, or to a certain necessity of things, which is the theory of a large number of metaphysicians. To attribute the evil to society is manifestly fallacious, for whence came the evil into society? To place a portion of existing evil to the charge of a primitive and absolute necessity of things is not to solve the problem, but to deny it, inasmuch as the very fact of proclaiming evil necessary is to proclaim it good.

Insufficiency of the individualistic solution.

How far, now, have we advanced in the solution of our problem? Shadows surround us on every side, and we seem lost in labyrinths without issue. We have, however, ascertained some facts: Evil, for example, cannot proceed from God, for the good and the will of God are one and the same thing. To make

God the author of evil is a logical contradiction; nor can evil proceed from an eternal principle other than God, for God is himself the universal principle, outside of which there exists, primitively, none other; he, and he alone, is eternal. We are therefore forced to look for the origin of evil to created wills. On studying the individual action of created wills we find therein an explanation of a considerable portion of existing evil. There is, however, another and a large portion which escapes this explanation. An evil influence seems to weigh down upon humanity throughout all the pages of its history, and from the very beginning; or, to use a more appropriate figure, an evil principle seems to have infected humanity as a whole, and to exist in each one of us in the very heart of our being. But what is this principle? whence can it spring? To answer this will be the purpose of our next lecture.

LECTURE IV.

THE SOLUTION.

We are seeking for the origin of evil, that is, of a disorder which manifests itself in humanity under the three forms of error, suffering, and sin. We have encountered one solution of the problem—that which attributes sin exclusively to individual volition, and regards the other elements of evil as simply the natural consequences of individual sins. In regarding error and suffering as sequences of sin, this theory satisfies both conscience and reason. But in that it attributes the origin of sin exclusively to individual volitions, we have found it insufficient. It cannot account for the general prevalence of suffering, nor for the existence in humanity of an all-prevalent element or germ of sin antecedent to all volition. There exists, as we have said, an infectious principle which vitiates all hearts. Whence comes it? It is of great importance for our practical life to recognize the essential character of evil. If we ignore the fact that humanity is in a state of fundamental disorder, we are only too ready to regard the general state of things, the common usage, as the proper rule for that which ought to be, and from this results a great

enfeebling of the conscience. The question as to the origin of this wrong state of humanity appears at first glance to be a question purely speculative. And, in fact, it is not directly practical. As soon as we admit that evil ought not to be, it follows that, in case our heart is evil, it is our duty to resist it. The whole bearing of our investigations on the conduct of life is contained in this simple maxim, "Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good." As far as practice is concerned, therefore, it would seem that we might here pass immediately to the subject of our sixth lecture, which is, to treat of the conflict of life. We cannot, however, concede in an absolute sense the moral indifference of the question now before us. If we have no definite opinion as to the origin of evil, we are very apt either to regard it as necessary, which enfeebles the conscience, or to derive it from God, which seriously violates the religious sentiment. Without being directly practical, therefore, the question as to the origin of evil has yet a real influence in the sphere of morals. Moreover, as the method of our lectures is philosophical, and as the peculiarity of philosophy is to seek for a solution wherever a problem is encountered, we must here tarry longer. We may remark in passing, however, that, provided only you fully admit the obligation of combating error, the doubts which some of you may

In how far speculations on the origin of evil are of practical bearing.

entertain as to the solution which I propose will in nowise neutralize, for such, the value of the subsequent lectures. After dissenting for awhile on the field of theory, we will agree again when coming to the practical applications. I propose now to submit to you what seems to me the best solution of the problem of evil, then to indicate its historical sources, and finally, in developing it, to signalize the inferences to which it leads us, as to the primitive condition of humanity and the origin of its actual condition. The order of our thoughts will, therefore, be: The Solution Proposed, the Historical Sources of the Solution, the Primitive Condition of Humanity, and the Origin of its Present Condition.

General heads of the fourth lecture.

I. The Solution Proposed.

We are studying the problem of evil in a general manner, as bearing on all created spirits; but as humanity alone, of all the families of spirits whose existence we may suppose, lies within the sphere of our observation, we will apply our theory as to all spirits, to mankind in particular.

The solution I have to propose is this: Humanity is corrupted because it has corrupted itself. A primitive act of humanity has, by an abuse of free-will, by a revolt against law, created the evil heart of humanity. From this it follows that in each indi-

vidual two things are to be distinguished: first, his personal will, which is responsible for his acts, and for his consent to the inclinations of nature; secondly, the human nature which is in him, and for which he is responsible on his part, not as an individual, but in his quality of human being. There are here two affirmations which must be maintained with equal force: the collective responsibility of humanity, and the individual responsibility of each of its members. These affirmations do not contradict, but simply limit and complement, each other. While the nature of the problem will require me to insist on the collective responsibility of the race, it is essential to guard intact the responsibility of the individual. We will be careful not to imitate Luther's drunken peasant, who, in his effort to ride upright, no sooner righted himself up from one side than he found himself veering to the other, without ever finding his proper equilibrium.

The two elements in human responsibility.

In order to the acceptance, or even comprehension, of the solution I propose, it is necessary to consider humanity as not simply a collection of individuals, a numerical mass, but as a real existence, distinct from the individuals, without, however, being separate from them, and which may be the object of moral imputation. We have something analogous to this conception when we speak of the human conscience and consciousness as in contrast to those of individuals,

and when we attribute certain sentiments and acts to humanity as a whole. But when we look at the matter more closely we are apt to regard this as mere figurative speech, and to conclude that it is only the individuals who have a real existence, and that the word *humanity* is a mere abstract term designating no other reality than a collection of units. This manner of thinking has in its favor both an apparent plausibleness, and a form of philosophy which readily obtains credit, from the fact that it is in harmony with first impressions in this regard. The theory which I present conflicts sharply with the first conclusions of common sense. And, in view of the difficulty of the subject, I shall here propose a compromise. I pledge myself not to terminate this discussion with a triumphant assumption that I have refuted every objection and dissipated every shade of darkness. On the other hand, I ask of you not to reject at once the view I present, for the simple reason that it may seem new. To reject every new thought would be to close the way against progress. Though my view may seem strange, do not, therefore, immediately pronounce it absurd, but take ample time to reflect upon it. An idea is a life-germ. Treat my view as a thought-germ ; let it grow ; nurture it by meditation, and pass a definitive judgment upon it only after seeing the nature and quality of the fruit which it may produce. Moreover, my thoughts are

not so chained together but that those who may not accept their whole import, will, nevertheless, be able to derive some profit from the details of the discussion.

I might allege with strict truthfulness that contemporary science, especially during the last half century, has been rapidly leading the human mind to the very solution which I have proposed. I might, therefore, appeal to your taste for novelty. I might say that I present you with a conquest of science which is not only modern, but which is more than modern, and whose *rôle*, in fact, belongs to the future. But while in one sense it is new in science and philosophy—so new that it is as yet only in the birth-stage — still in another sense it is ancient, very ancient: it is one of the old truths of humanity, which science is now seriously beginning to spell out, and will finally succeed, I am convinced, in fully reading. As my solution is, therefore, not only new but also old, it is proper briefly to refer to its origin: this propriety, however, is only historical, but not essential.

Modern science favors the view of an impersonal element in man.

A scientific doctrine is a supposition, an hypothesis, designed to explain certain facts, and which is versified in proportion as it explains the facts. Its historical origin has no important bearing on its truth. For example, the law of gravitation was at first simply a supposition. This supposition has finally become a law, from the fact of its rationally accounting for the

movements of celestial and other bodies—from this and no other reason. The discovery of this great law has been attributed to Newton; some have also attributed it to Pascal. This dispute, though of some historical interest, is of no bearing on the law itself, as its truth is demonstrated by astronomical observations and by calculations quite independently of the name of its founder. The question of origin is, therefore, of no influence on the proof of a doctrine. It is usual, however, to associate laws with the persons or sources from which they were first derived. In the case now before us, it is quite important briefly to glance at the sources of the solution I propose.

II. Historical Sources of this Solution.

Our solution has various antecedents in the history of religious doctrine. It has always been included by implication in any real and serious faith in God. It has been uttered and proposed to the world in a positive, though not scientific, form, in the Christian system. The sum of what I have to say in solution of the problem of evil may be thus expressed: Historical sources of this solution.

The Christian dogma of the fall of man contains the philosophical doctrine which best accounts to reason for the facts of experience involved in the problem of evil.

The importance of this proposition requires that it be carefully explained. We will, therefore, explain

each of its terms: *Fall of humanity, dogma, philosophical doctrine.*

The idea of the fall.

And first, what is the Christian idea of the fall of man? I shall explain it in the sense in which it seems to me as common to all the great manifestations of Christian thought. The affirmation, that there is a radical disorder in human nature, is of central importance in the organism of Christian doctrine; it is, in fact, the corner-stone of the edifice. This doctrine contains three chief thoughts: the creation of the race, its redemption, and its moral restoration or sanctification. The object of redemption and sanctification is, to re-establish the primitive plan of the creative will in the midst of a world in disorder. If we deny that the world is in a state of radical disorder there remains no place for redemption; there is no occasion for a restoration; there remains simply the doctrine of creation, that is to say, deism. In this case, those who still claim to be Christians are utterly unable to answer the deist when he exclaims, "What an idea you have of your God! You think he needed to intervene in the world by a supernatural act; surely, therefore, he is a very unskillful workman, since he did not do his work well at the first attempt, but had to return to it." By this objection those who ignore the radical disorder of the world are either reduced to silence or involved in a series of contradictions. Notwithstanding this these

Christians will continue to call Christ their Saviour, and to use the words salvation and restoration, forgetting that only that which is lost needs to be saved, and that a work of restoration presupposes a precedent disorder. But, on the other hand, the moment we admit that human nature has been corrupted, we understand the reason of the intervention of God for the re-establishment of order; an intervention which is supernatural, as bearing upon our fallen nature, but which contemplates only the re-establishment of our primitive nature.

A radical disturbance introduced into the plan of creation, being the corner-stone of the Christian system, and also of our own theory, the question arises, From whence came this disturbance. If it were required to believe that a being like one of us had sinned, and that this sin was imputed to other beings, others in the absolute sense of the word; if it were required to admit that reinforcements to a garrison should be held as guilty of an act of sedition which took place before their arrival, such a view would so directly shock the sentiment of justice that the human conscience would not even give it a hearing. But the Christian system does not teach this. Its teaching may be expressed thus: The act which disturbed the order of creation was not the act of an individual, in the sense which we now give this term, but of a primitive individual, who participated

A radical disorder in the plan of creation.

not only in human nature as one of us, but in whom, because of his primitiveness, this whole nature was concentrated. His acts involve two characteristics which ever since then have been distinct: they were at once individual and human, in the full scope of this latter term. Entire humanity was really present in him who fell, and who was its head, its germ, and its source.

Now, is this the sense of the Christian system? It is a question of fact. Open whatever authorities you please: turn to the Catechism of the Council of Trent,* the Catechism of the Orthodox Church of the East,† the Institutes of Calvin,‡ and you will see every-where the same care taken to prevent the thought that sin should be regarded as passing from one individual to others who did not stand in an essential connection with the first. You will every-where notice the employment of the images of a fountain, a germ, a source. "God," says Bossuet, "contemplates all men as a single person in him from whom he causes them all to spring." I heard

Corroborative authorities cited.

* "Adam was, as it were, a fountain, a principle."—Chap. iii, 1.

† "The stream which issues from an impure spring is very naturally corrupt likewise."—*Third Article.*

‡ "On ne trouvera nul commencement de ceste pollution, sinon qu'on monte jusques au premier père de tous, comme à la fontaine. Certainement il nous faut avoir cela pour résolu, qu' Adam n'a pas seulement esté père de l'humaine nature, mais comme source ou racine: et pourtant qu'en la corruption d'iceluy, le genre humain par raison a esté corrompu."—*Institution de la religion chrestienne*, par Jehan Calvin, Livre II, chap. i.

M. Charles Secrétan once observe, while beautifully commenting on this thought of the Bishop of Meaux, that to affirm that God contemplates any thing is to say that that thing is a fact in the highest and most real sense of the word. Let us now cite the authority of a contemporary, one who is now most successfully defending the Christian cause in Germany. "The condition of all of us," says Professor Luthardt, "has been determined by the act of the first of our race; for this was not simply the act of an individual, but the act of the representative of all men. . . . We form collectively a great unity. Each one is mysteriously involved in the whole; no one can isolate himself and say, What does that concern me?" Such is the sense which we attribute to the words, Fall of Man.

The nature of a dogma.

But what is a dogma? A dogma is an affirmation which is not based directly on reason, or on experience, but on faith in the authority of testimony. If we take the term in its widest sense, we would have to say that our ordinary thoughts are full of dogmas. For example, how do those who have never been in England know that there is such a city as London? They know it only by faith in testimony. Nevertheless, their belief that there is such a city is perfect and absolute.

Religious dogmas.

But the word dogma is generally limited to the religious sphere. What then is a religious dogma? It is an affirmation which is

accepted on the authority of supernatural testimony, that is to say, a testimony based on facts which lie outside of human power. The witness of the facts may be a mere intermediary agent; he may also know directly, and by virtue of his own nature, the divine world, as was the case with Christ in the belief of Christians. A Christian dogma is an affirmation based on the authority of the testimony of Christ, who is himself the dogma of dogmas. By its very nature, a dogma is authority. As it is a testimony rendered in the sphere of history, it remains unchangeable in its character of historical fact. For such as accept this testimony as a revelation of absolute truth, the dogma becomes an unchangeable truth; a truth which may be understood more or less perfectly, and whose fuller comprehension may be attained to only progressively, but which in itself remains fixed and immovable. This phase of the matter alienates many minds from the dogma, because the authority which is inseparable from it appears to them as a chain. But believers, finding their strength where others seem to see shackles, do not think it best that all bonds should be broken. They take courage from various analogies, and say, for example, that a ship bereft of its mast and helm would not do well to sever the cable which attaches it to the succoring steamer, and that the steamer would not do well to throw overboard the chain by which it might anchor itself in time of storm.

The authority of a dogma, as it rests solely on faith, is manifestly void for any but believers. To impose the authority of a dogma on those who disbelieve it is irrational and immoral. Men cannot be forced to believe; at furthest, they can only be induced to an empty outward conformity. The ignoring of this has brought great scandal upon nominal Christianity. The lingering vision of the smoke of Inquisition fires obscures still, to-day, the skies of many a soul; and, to pass from the great example to a little one, the flames which devoured a Servetus have not attracted many hearts to the Protestant Gospel. The confounding of the authority which the dogma has for a believer, with the authority of the dogma as imposed on those who do not believe it, was the scourge of the Middle Ages.

Dogmas valid only for believers.

But, finally, what do we understand by a philosophical doctrine? What is philosophy? Philosophy is a search after a general explanation of the universe, under condition of freedom from all dogmatic assumption. No science that rests on a dogmatic assumption, whether it be the authority of Christ, or of Mohammed, or of any one whomsoever who is believed to be an organ of the Divinity, can be philosophy. But shall we, therefore, say that philosophy is an employment of reason freed from all authority whatever? Certainly not. Such an employment of reason would be only a free groping

A philosophical doctrine, as distinguished from a dogma.

in utter night. Philosophical speculations are subject to the authority of facts, to the authority of logic, to the authority of natural testimony; but they never appeal, in establishing a principle, to the authority of a supernatural, divine testimony.

Having now explained the terms of our fundamental affirmation, we reproduce it:

The Christian dogma of the fall of man contains the philosophical doctrine which best accounts to reason for the facts of experience involved in the problem of evil.

I presume, now, that some of you are thinking that I have forgotten my purpose, of treating this question from a philosophical stand-point. You are saying within yourselves, that, as faith is the domain of authority, and philosophy the domain of liberty, there is an incompatibility between the two.

The objection, if founded in fact, is weighty, and it is important to understand ourselves. There *is* no place for the authority of dogmas in a philosophical discussion; a dogma can be proposed as a dogma only in a society which is based on the assent of its members to a common faith, that is, in a Church. Here, therefore, we cannot appeal to dogmas for proof. Should we, however, find in the language of dogmas a solution which seems to us plausible, and if, after carefully subjecting it to the ordeal of a philosophical examination, that is, testing it on its own merits, and seeing how far it accounts for and

explains facts, it should thus commend itself to our understanding, I see not why we might not adopt it, without for that reason ceasing to discuss philosophically. And this is what I propose to do. I am not going to introduce the authoritp of a dogma into this discussion, but I invite you to a free examination of a philosophical doctrine, stating at the same time that this doctrine is actually found among the Christian dogmas.

The dogma of the fall not appealed to as dogma.

And who could object to such a procedure? Christians? But is it not plain that if, by means of a free discussion, it can be shown that there is in the sphere of dogmas a philosophical doctrine of the greatest importance for science; if it can be thus shown that the simple words of Jesus contain a solution of the great problem of humanity, which the wisdom of Greece and of the Orient did not succeed in solving—is it not plain that this would be a strengthening of the Christian cause? a strengthening which could proceed from nothing other than a free discussion of this kind? But is it perhaps the freethinkers who will object to the course I propose? Where, then, is their boast of independence, if they may not examine and discuss a doctrine simply because it happens to coincide with a dogma? This would be to show themselves guilty of the same prejudice and intolerance which they are so generally accustomed to attribute to those who hold to the Church.

With these remarks, I hope to have made my position understood. The historical origin of the solution I propose, and the fact that it coincides with a Christian dogma, are circumstances irrelevant to, and without bearing on, our discussion. I frankly mention its historical origin just as, for example, in the discussion of a doctrine of Plato, I would attribute it historically to him. We will, therefore, proceed to examine this solution independently, and on its own merits. And first, let us inquire what was probably the primitive state of humanity?

III. Primitive Condition of Humanity.

"Every thing is good on coming from the hands of the Creator." This phrase, from Rousseau, shall be our starting-point. Every thing is good; that is, according to our definition of the good, it corresponds to its destination. But from the fact that a creature is good, does it follow that it must be perfect, in the sense of a complete and total realization of its whole destination? No; such a view is false even in regard to material creation. In regard to matter, we might indeed conceive of it as springing in a complete form and definitive order from the hands of the Creator, but facts show that this was not the case. Matter appears first under a crude form, and is constantly transforming itself into higher forms. The revolu-

All is good, primitively.

Though not perfected.

True even of matter.

tions of nature are not definitively fixed. Does the earth in its motion around the sun uniformly trace the same circle? No; for the sun itself, with its entire train of planets, is also in motion. Probably in the whole period of time, from the beginning of creation to the end of the present order of things, the earth will not have twice intersected the same line in space. And this revolving earth is, within itself, a theater of endless transformation. It is not now what it was at its origin; and after the lapse of centuries it will no longer be what it is to-day. In the presence of this general revolution of all nature, as disclosed by modern science, modern poetry has taken many a daring flight in search of an answer to the question, Whither do we tend?*

* For example:

Seigneur! Seigneur! où va la terre dans le ciel?
Le saurons-nous jamais? Qui percera vos voiles,
Noirs firmaments semés de nuages d'étoiles?

VICTOR HUGO.

Cependant la nuit marche, et sur l'abîme immense
Tous ces mondes flottants gravitent en silence,
Et nous-mêmes, avec eux emportés dans leurs cours,
Vers un port inconnu nous avançons toujours.
Souvent, pendant la nuit, au souffle du zéphyre,
On sent la terre aussi flotter comme un navire.

. . . . . .

Soleils! mondes flottants qui voguez avec nous,
Dites, s'il vous l'a dit, où donc allons-nous tous?
Quel est le port céleste où son souffle nous guide?

LAMARTINE.

And the longing of poetry is also the longing of reason. For who, after contemplating the spectacle of the universal revolution of worlds, could suppose that to the question, Whither go they? the proper answer would be, Nowhere! Astronomers do not think so; they would be most happy to discover the general law and the general direction of the movement of the whole celestial system.

It is plain, therefore, that nature has a plan, and that this plan is not at once realized, but that nature is ever tending to its realization. Will the time ever come when the plan of nature shall have reached its ultimate accomplishment. Will the celestial globes finally fix themselves in a uniform motion, and crystallize themselves in the immobility of perfection? Perhaps the question transcends the sphere of human thought. It is certain, however, that nature was made, and well made at first, but that it was not made perfect.

Spirits not perfect at once.

On passing to the world of spirits this order is more evident still; for it is impossible to conceive, even in theory, of a primitive perfection of the spiritual world. The destination of spirits is the good, that is, an order of relations from which happiness arises. Their very constitution indicates this end; and we have, in this respect, the guarantee of reason as applied to the idea of creation, for, as we have elsewhere shown, love is the sole motive which

we can conceive of as having induced the Supreme Being to the creation of the universe; and the good of the creature is the sole object which we can assign to creative love.

To correspond to its destination, a spirit must necessarily have a free-will as its basis and essence, an intelligent conscience, revealing the law to the will, and, finally, a pure heart, free from any evil predisposition. A spirit so constituted is placed in the presence of law, in the accomplishment of which it is to find its happiness; but this state is not perfection. To think of a spirit as originally perfect is a contradiction. A spirit is a capacity, a potency, and its law is to realize itself by its own acts, to make and perfect itself. As we find in nature no perfection immediately realized, so in the spiritual world is such a perfection not only not discoverable, it is moreover impossible; for a spirit which should be perfect from its very origin, and should not have developed its own moral character, would be no spirit at all—would be an absurd chimera. The primitive state of a spirit, therefore, is that of a being with a free-will, innocent but not perfect. The earthly paradise of innocence is not only to be guarded, it is also to be cultivated by the created will, so as to be transformed into a celestial Eden, the plan of which is revealed to the conscience of the free being as the true law of its destiny. The golden age is the gilded dream of inno-

The destiny of a spirit.

cence, contemplating under a beautiful symbolism the destiny set before it by eternal love.

The perfection of a spirit must be the product of its own liberty; to ask it of the Creator, is to ask him to not create free beings. But can this liberty itself, which is to conduct a spirit to its perfection, be perfect at first and at once? No. Liberty in its first stage can only be conceived of as an imperfect liberty. It must pass, by its own action, from an inferior to a superior stage. Let us give special attention to this thought.

A lower and higher stage of liberty.

The word liberty has two senses. In the first place, it is the faculty of choosing, and includes necessarily the possibility of evil. In another sense, we call free that being who does all that he wishes. Note carefully these two ideas; they are very clearly distinct. That liberty which consists in the possibility of choosing between alternatives is a less high form of liberty than that of a will which does whatever it chooses, without being shut up to a choice. In the first sense, liberty supposes a law. A finite power (we pass over the mystery of the liberty of the Infinite One) that should not be under a law which it could obey or violate, is inconceivable as a moral power; such a conception is only that of an intangible caprice, a blind farce, yielding to impulses from without, and having within itself no principle of self-determination. There must be a law, a command, to

awaken the will, and to reveal to it its liberty of choice. The second form of liberty supposes the absence of all law. These two notions of liberty seem contradictory. They are not so, however: they find their harmony in the mystery of the heart. The mystery of the heart has already been discussed, but we must here revert to the subject.

The two stages harmonize in the "heart."

In the phenomena of habit, repeated volitions transform themselves into a nature. After having voluntarily performed an act a number of times this act becomes a habit, and habit begets a power, a propension; it crystallizes itself in our heart, so to speak, and becomes a love, in the most general sense of the word. Now what is the working of love? It wills what it loves; and when the soul works by love, it does all that it wills, inasmuch as it wills nothing outside of its love. For him who loves the good, therefore, the law requiring the good disappears as law, in that it dissolves itself in love, and the command of the conscience assumes the form of an impulse of the heart. The liberty of choosing between good and evil remains thenceforth simply what we call in philosophy a metaphysical possibility; but the choosing of evil has become morally impossible. To the "Thou shalt not" of the conscience, corresponds the *non possumus* of the heart. Beginning in the simple liberty of choice, the will may thus, by the simple fact of choosing, make a decision which will become

definitive, and the struggle will cease in triumph. The will may, by its own action, pass from the inferior form of liberty (the power of choice) to the higher form of liberty, (the state of a soul which does all that it wills.)

We are able now to conceive of the plan which humanity, manifesting itself in individual existences, but maintaining itself in harmony and unity by the common purpose of executing the divine plan, was destined to realize. Beginning in the mere possibility of evil, that is to say, in a state of innocence, and, by the effort of free-will in resistance to evil, annihilating even the possibility of evil, and attaining to a state of perfection, or holiness, characterized by the fact that liberty has definitively given itself over to the good: such would be the normal development of virtue. If the will does, at each moment, what it ought to do, it obtains finally a definitive triumph over the possibility of evil. Evil has not appeared; it has become impossible without ever having been destroyed, for it has never been realized.

The normal development of virtue.

In what sense sin is impossible to a mature spirit.

All this is difficult to understand, because, involved as we are in a world where evil weighs upon us, it requires a vigorous effort to so far free ourselves from the burden of a bitter experience as to conceive of this passage from primitive liberty to perfect liberty, without the intervention of disorder. However, even

in our actual experience there are some analogies which will aid us to appreciate this conception. The two senses of the word liberty are familiar to us, as may be readily illustrated. Whom, for example, do we esteem as more free? that young merchant who, for the first time entering upon business, debates within himself whether he had better impose on his customers or engage in honest dealing, and who, in this simple hesitation of choice, has a consciousness of his liberty? or, is it not rather this same merchant, who, after having grown gray in honorable trade, and felt himself bound by the reiterated action of his will to the law of integrity, feels himself now henceforth incapable of deceiving, and has thus by the free exercise of volition made himself the servant of probity? Surely we esteem as in a higher sense free, not he who doubtfully balances between good and evil, but he who, by a reiterated and definitive choice of the good, has raised himself beyond the temptation of evil. Obedience in the face of conquered temptation is the act of nascent liberty choosing the good; and when temptation is definitely overcome by a love of the good, liberty becomes perfect in a full, joyous, and unhesitating obedience. Thus, even in the midst of our present darkness, we meet some luminous traits which help us to understand the transition from primitive to perfect liberty, without the intervention of evil.

But has this programme of spiritual development been fully carried out anywhere? Lift your eyes to the heavens; I speak of the heavens of astronomers.

Are there sinless worlds?

The universe is immense; no one believes, I presume, that the whole family of God is confined to our earth—that the Eternal Shepherd of souls has, under his crook, only our little flock. We sometimes smile at our ancestors for having made of humanity the center of the universe. But it was an incident of ignorance rather than a sin of pride; it was at an epoch when one could believe that the sun was only a great torch, and the stars but lamps attached to the solid vault of the sky. But what shall we say of certain learned men of our day, who, now that science has opened the immeasurable depths of space and peopled them with worlds, presume still to think and say that there is in the whole universe no intelligence superior to that of man? Look then up to the skies, fix your eye on whatever star you please—perhaps that one which, shining out suddenly between the clouds, awakens with its light a ray of hope in your heart, and ask yourself: Is there not, then, somewhere a happy world? Is there not upon some one of those globes which gem the sky a family of intelligent and free beings, who have used their liberty only in confirming themselves in the good, and who, growing continually in the knowledge of the truth, grow, at the same time, in happiness, and wonder each day

anew at the increasing depths of bliss which the heart can take in? Is there not some family of free spirits, who, when presenting themselves before God, can commence their worship without the confession of riginal sin, and can chant the hymn of pure thankness and love to Him from whom all proceeds, and y whom all exists, and who has given them the unpeakable gift of life, and the glorious privilege of that berty by which they have realized the happiness r which his eternal love destined them? If I should firm positively that such a world does exist, I would rovoke your smile. But if you should affirm that uch a world does not exist, I should indulge in a ile, in my turn. At all events, that happy star is not our planet; that family of sinless creatures is not the human race. Let us return to humanity.

IV. Origin of the Present Condition of Humanity.

What was the origin of evil, according to the solution which I indicate? The end proposed to humanity was to realize the harmony and happiness of a spiritual community. But humanity in its very source and origin revolts against its law; so we assume. The created will desires to place itself, as regards the law, in a state of complete independence; that is to say, it wishes to become its own law. What employment, now, will it make of this independence?

Its acts, whatever they may be, will be acts of disorder, since they will be acts accomplished in contravention of the law of primitive and essential order. Now, this order being the submission of matter to spirit, and the submission of spirits to the law of charity, the disorder will manifest itself in the domination of spirit by matter, and in a spirit of self-seeking and of domination over others, which will give rise, as society develops itself, to endless strife instead of harmony. Fleshly-mindedness and pride will be the two principal forms of the revolt.

Sensuality and pride the two forms of sin.

The human heart being corrupted, liberty will be compromised. A developed evil nature, born primitively of the will, will paralyze its exercise. Dominated by his propensions, man will feel himself the slave of his vices, while yet preserving in remorse, the witness of his lost liberty.

From the perversion of the heart and from the enfeeblement of the will, error will spring; and error, beclouding the natural light, will deform the conscience.

Suffering will then appear as a punishment in the sphere of justice, and as a remedy in the sphere of goodness; and entire humanity having, in its source, participated in the primitive revolt, every man will, by the simple fact of his sharing in human nature, be subjected to the consequences of this revolt.

As soon as these views are admitted, the individualistic solution, which we have had to reject as incomplete, becomes so supplemented, as to cover the whole ground. For what, in fact, was the defectiveness of this solution? It did not account for that large portion of evil whose origin cannot be found in the merely individual action of historic volitions. But this phase of evil is now explained. At the origin of our race, and before the commencement of history, an act of humanity corrupted the heart of the race; it is humanity itself, that, by its own revolt, has precipitated itself into error and suffering. The all-prevalence of sin is explained by the existence of temptations inherent in the human heart, and by the enfeeblement of the will produced by the evil inclination of the heart. We know well enough the all-prevalence of suffering. Great mysteries still hover about the share of suffering and temptation which falls to the lot of individuals;* but we have made important steps in the di-

The individualistic solution supplemented.

* It has been attempted to account for our individual lots by supposing that we suffer here the consequences of our individual acts in a previous existence. Cicero mentions this doctrine as in his day already ancient. It has several times been reproduced in our day. I cannot discuss here a theory of such importance. It concedes the universality of suffering and sin, and maintains intact the existence of God and the authority of conscience. But in explaining our present state by a primitive individualism, it does not account for the actual solidarity of the race.

rection of light, in that we have found an origin for that portion of suffering, and that germ of sin, which observation proves to exist in every man, by virtue of his being a man, and independently of his personal acts. — Evil is an essential part of our world, such as it is, such as the revolt of the creature has made it; but the evil is, in itself, accidental. It *is*, but it *ought not* to be. Its possibility is the condition of liberty; but its realization is directly contrary to the plan of the universe, that is, to the divine will. Thus the cloud which evil interposes between God and us vanishes away, and the glory of the Creator shines forth in immaculate purity. Henceforth, when the poet shall ask why the Master created evil so great, we will call him in question, and reply that God did not create evil at all.

Did the fall disturb our relation to nature?

The idea of a primitive fall enables us to anticipate the possibility that the consequences of the revolt of the created spirit may have disturbed its relations with nature, and that nature may not be for us, now, that which the plan of the Creator designed it to be. This, it is true, is but a single door opened upon the darkness; still, it is an open door, whereas the individualistic solution offers in this direction but a closed and impenetrable wall. It is certain in fact that the historical action of individual wills can offer no possible shadow of a solution for this phase of our problem.

To charge the creature with the whole origin of evil is the only means of not charging it upon God; for, what we call the nature of things is either God or it is nothing. And is it a humiliation for the creature to bear the whole burden of evil? or is it rather a glorification! It is a glory shining forth in humiliation; it is a humiliation revealing a primitive glory. In this respect our solution comes in contact with two contrary sentiments: on the one hand, with that pride which rejects so high a responsibility; and on the other, with a morbid humility which shrinks from the idea of so great a power. The solution is humiliating and exalting at the same time; it brings into relief that two-fold character of human nature which Pascal has traced in immortal words: its greatness and its misery.

The whole blame *must* rest on man.

God did not create evil. Between the Creator and the world, as it now is, there is interposed a sad creation of the creature. This doctrine is of great shaping influence on the whole drift of our thinking. The passing immediately from the world, such as it is, to the perfect God, is the source of the gravest errors in philosophy, as well as of many other misconceptions of society at large. It is by this leaping from this imperfect world to the perfect Creator that philosophy is led to the negation of evil, starting out, as it does, with this incontestable axiom, that whatever proceeds from God is good. It is on the

A false method of philosophy.

same erroneous method that are based many presumptuous and, sometimes, evil-working vindications of Divine Providence. For example, if you impute to the divine will, not the essential and constituent laws of human society, which are truly a part of the plan of creation, but our society as it is—if you attempt to repress the complaints of those who suffer from real social abuses by urging them to bow under the hand of Providence—you will seek in vain to clothe the evil with a divine sanction; you will not obtain submission; you will only add to revolt against society, revolt against God. It is by assuming that certain general and permanent facts, which do not depend on individual wills, form a part of the original divine plan, that men have been led to apologize for war, representing it, not as the bloody sequel of sin, but as one of the primitive and, therefore, good elements of the universe.

Inconsiderate vindications of Providence.

In another sphere of thought, if you do not admit, despite of all the mysteries that surround this subject, the possibility that a perturbation has been introduced into nature, your apologies for Providence will frequently conflict with the science of the naturalist, and sometimes even be nonplused by the simple questions of childhood.

The world in all its constituent elements is the work of God; and, in humanity, all that normally constitutes our nature is good in itself. The heart,

as the power of loving, is good; reason, as the power of comprehending, is good; and volition, as the power of acting, is more than a good, it is the basis and condition of all good. But the world, as it is, is a disordered world; and between the world, as it is, and God, there lies the fall of humanity, which has created an evil potency that weighs heavily upon our destinies. A fact that is general, and even universal may be evil, for it may be the consequence of the primitive revolt of humanity against its law.

Humanity *per se* is good, notwithstanding the fall.

Note well the practical importance of this thought. If you ignore the fact that the world is in disorder, you may aspire to the good in obedience to the natural instinct of your heart; but on coming in conflict with real life your heart will be bitterly disappointed. If you mingle in the life of society with the thought that human nature is good, you will very soon feel the approaches of dejection, and a misanthropic gloom will most likely take possession of your soul. But if, on the contrary, you act on the conviction that human nature is fallen, you will meet without surprise with sin, disorder and suffering; and you will combat them, as a soldier of the good, with a firm confidence in the final triumph of your cause.

I will sum up these considerations at the same time that I answer an erroneous notion that is quite prevalent in our day. You often hear said that the doc-

trine of the fall is the religious and ancient doctrine; whereas, the doctrine of progress is the new and philosophical doctrine, and that we are forced to make our choice between these two irreconcilable conceptions. Progress, it is said, is the law of the intellectual world, as gravitation is the law of matter. Now, the law of progress excludes the idea of a fall; for a fall of humanity would be the very contrary of progress. This manner of reasoning rests on a radical confusion of ideas in regard to the word *law*. A physical law being, as we have said, the expression of constant facts in a sphere where liberty does not exist, every such law excludes its contrary; and the knowledge of the true law justifies the denial of every fact which contradicts it, just as a certain knowledge of a fact justifies the denial of the pretended law which would deny that fact. But the moral law, being proposed to free beings, may be obeyed or violated according to the decisions of liberty. The idea of progress is represented as conflicting with the idea of the fall. As well might we say that the fact that Nero grew worse as he grew older is a refutation of the idea of progress; for if progress in humanity is a law which is always realized with the strictness of physical laws, it would follow that what is true of humanity must be true of each of its members: if humanity could not fall, Nero could not grow worse.

A false notion of progress.

But let us look at the matter in a more general aspect. Does the idea of progress render superfluous our solution? Progress, it is thought by some, is inconsistent with the existence of evil, because progress, a primitive law of creation, can realize itself in the exclusively good. True progress tends from imperfection to perfection, but imperfection is not evil. If there exist disorder and evil, it must be because volitions have gone astray. If progress in our world appears under the form of a restoration from evil, that fact itself is a striking proof of the doctrine of the fall. To admit that progress consists in overcoming evil, and that it is a fundamental law of the universe, is to admit that evil, the condition of progress, is a primitive and necessary element of things; and to make evil a primitive and necessary element of things is, we repeat it, to proclaim that it is good, or, in other words, to deny its existence. There is, in fact, no need of choosing between these two ideas, progress and a fall; they are both true; they are both necessary to account for the present state of humanity. Man started out in a state of innocence in which a spiritual heaven was present to his mind as the goal at which he should aim, as the gift of the Creator which he was to appropriate by the use of his own liberty. But heaven became vailed from the eye of his conscience by the consequences of the fall; and, nevertheless, it remains still the object of his

aspirations—the ideal after which every soul is, in some degree, athirst.

The true idea of progress.

In a normal state of things, progress would be the rising from imperfection to perfection, or from a lesser perfection to an ever greater; in the present abnormal state of things, as introduced by the fall, progress is the rising out of, and triumphing over, evil, and the ever fuller appropriation of the good.

LECTURE V.

THE PROOF.

THE proof—such is the title of our present lecture. It will consist of three parts. I will first explain the nature of the proof which I design to propose; I will then offer my arguments; finally, I will try to solve the chief difficulties which the subject presents. The order of our thoughts will, therefore, be: Nature of the Proof, Presentation of the Proof, and Solution of Difficulties.

General heads of the fifth lecture.

I. NATURE OF THE PROOF.

Let us first come to an understanding as to the nature of a scientific demonstration; and to this purpose I will draw an analogy.

Process of a scientific demonstration illustrated.

What is the process by which the science of celestial motion has come to its present stage? The movements of the heavens have attracted man's attention in all ages, and the science which seeks to account for them is one of the most ancient. For a long time a system of astronomy prevailed which is known as the Ptolemaic. It explained celestial phenomena by assuming that the earth is motionless, and that the heavenly bodies revolve around it in circles to which

various movements were assigned, according to the distances of the lines traversed by these movements, and according to the velocity itself of these movements. Copernicus, a Polish priest, came to think that this solution of the problem was too complicated to be true, and he set himself about searching for a simpler one. During his researches he found, in certain ancient books, the notion, once sustained by Pythagorean sages, that the sun remains motionless, and that the earth revolves around it in space. Of course, he did not find in these books his theory in that completed form in which he afterward proposed it to the world; he found simply its germ. Thus, he did not, as is generally supposed, discover the true system of the world by the simple inspiration of his genius. He found aids in the past; he found hints toward it in Cicero and Plutarch; and we have yet extant from his own hand the testimony that he honorably acknowledged his indebtedness.* The truth which he brought to light, though new in science,

* In a letter to Pope Paul III., which serves as preface to his work *De Revolutionibus Orbium Cœlestium*, Copernicus explains himself thus: "After having reflected a long while on the uncertainty of the mathematical traditions relative to the movements of the heavenly bodies, I began to be chagrined that philosophers who scrutinize so carefully the most insignificant things in the universe had not been able to fall upon a more certain explanation of the movements of the mechanism of a world which was created for us by the most perfect and systematic of workmen, *(ab optimo et regularissimo omnium opifice.)* For this reason I undertook to reread all the works of

was yet ancient in tradition—in a tradition which had almost disappeared.

When the discovery of Copernicus was made public it excited lively opposition. Its adversaries were numerous. They were, on the one hand, the learned defenders of the old idea, who could not so readily discard the results of all the labor they had given themselves to understand and further perfect the system generally admitted. On the other, they were the men of common sense, that superficial common sense which judges things by first appearances. And, in fact, had we of this generation not been taught from our earliest school-days that it is the earth that daily revolves, we also would not be readily convinced of the fact. We can, therefore, easily understand the popular applause obtained by an aged doctor of the Sorbonne while ridiculing this day-dreaming Copernicus, who, as he said, taught that people did not carry about their candles to light their houses, but that they carried about their houses to be lighted by the candles.

And to all these obstacles which opposed the propagation of the new theory, there was added also one

philosophers to which I could have access, in order to see whether some of them, perhaps, had not thought that the movements of the spheres are other than those assigned to them by our professors of mathematics. I discovered, first, in Cicero, that Nicetas had believed that it is the earth which moves. I found subsequently, from Plutarch, that some others had had the same opinion. . . . Upon this I began, myself also, to reflect on the mobility of the earth."

of the most memorable pieces of folly in the whole history of Catholicism. The theologians of the *Index* condemned the new system. This fact had its importance; though it had far less of importance than anti-religious passion has attributed to it. The common opinion is, that, when Copernicus published his discovery, science came to his defense while theology undertook his ruin. This is the romance of the matter, but not its history. As confirmation of this hear these words, which date from the second half of the seventeenth century: "No decree of Rome as to the movement of the earth will prove that the earth remains in repose; and if we only had *constant observations to prove that it is it that revolves*, all the men in the world would not hinder it from revolving, nor hinder themselves from revolving with it." Certainly this independent spirit was little daunted by the Roman *Index;* and he was, confessedly, an incomparable genius both in the physical sciences and in the mathematics: it was Pascal. At the time when Pascal wrote, therefore, science was still hesitating in regard to the Copernican system;* even the most

* "Pascal always hesitated to venture his opinion on the system of Copernicus, not because he feared the Inquisition, as Condorcet hastily says, but because his conviction was not yet formed."—*Note of Faugère, in his edition of Pascal.*

"Pascal seems positively to admit (in the passage referred to by the note of Faugère) that it is the heavens that revolve about the earth."—*Note of Havet, in his edition of Pascal.*

free and enlightened minds were still doubting whether the number of constantly verified facts was sufficient to confirm the theory of the revolution of the earth. It is only since the time of Newton that Copernicus has definitively triumphed. Now the discovery of Copernicus was published in 1543, and the great work of Newton dates from 1687. It required, therefore, one hundred and forty-four years of laborious observation and calculation, and also the aid of the discoveries of two geniuses of the first order, Kepler and Newton, to enable the doctrine of Copernicus to take place among the uncontested theories of science.

And why all this time? To verify by calculation the consequences of the new doctrine, to compare these consequences with an ever-increasing mass of facts, and thus to overcome by demonstration of the truth both the prejudice which clung to the ancient ideas, the imprudent decisions of the Catholic Church, and, above all, the first impressions of a superficial common sense. And what kept up the courage of the partisans of Copernicus in all this memorable contest? Study its history in the original texts, and you will see that what sustained their confidence was a profound faith in the wisdom of the Architect of the universe, a serious conviction that as God, according to the expression of Copernicus, is the best of workmen, so are his ways simple ones. The three great founders of modern Astronomy, Copernicus, Kepler,

and Newton, were each of them, in the highest acceptation of the term, adorers of God,—a fact forming one of the most glorious pages of the history of science, a page which many would gladly forget, but which no hostile power can efface.

We have thus shown, by means of a notable illustration, the nature of a scientific proof; let us now return to our special subject.

Application of the illustration.

We are in the presence of a great question. We wish to explain, not the motion of the heavenly bodies, but this fatal movement of the human soul which carries it toward evil. We have examined the solution most prevalent in the philosophy of the day, the individualistic, and found it insufficient to account for all the facts. We have sought for another. Where did we find it? Like Copernicus, in an ancient book; but in a book which is peculiar in this, that it has not ceased to be read, that it is, in fact, continually read more and more in every region of the globe, and that it has passed into a living tradition, permeating and modifying the highest civilization of the race. This solution is, as I think, the solution of the future. Ancient in tradition, and in that science which expresses and seeks to justify the tradition, it is yet new in philosophy, properly so-called. Now, if it should require as much as one hundred and forty-four years fully to demonstrate its truth, would there be any reason for astonishment?

Would it be surprising if it required as many years to explain scientifically the state of the human soul as it did to explain the march of the stars? To study the proposed solution in its consequences, and in its bearing on the best observed facts, may be a tedious labor; but it is a labor in which we all may take part. For, after all, it is the common sense of mankind which is to pronounce in the last instance on all scientific theories relative to human nature,—not that superficial common sense which judges by prejudices and first appearances; but that deep, serious common sense which discerns and constantly places in clearer light the fundamental laws of the human mind—I mean, in a word, reason, as God made it. If a superficial and frivolous common sense is the pest of science, on the other hand, that true common sense in which humanity utters its honest verdicts is the legitimate judge of all philosophical attempts to account for the state of society.

Genuine common sense the ultimate test of psychological truth.

To accomplish the work to which the subject invites you, the first thing to be done is to observe and reflect. The observation of moral phenomena requires neither a laboratory nor costly instruments; each one has always about him, both his soul, which is the object of observation, and his reason, which is its instrument. To facilitate your study you may derive aid from writers who have touched upon this

problem. I will limit myself to a few suggestions. The *Thoughts* of Pascal would greatly aid you. If you strip this book of a few traces of Jansenist asceticism, and of a few hasty sallies which the author would doubtless have modified had he lived to review his manuscripts, you will find abundant proof of this proposition. On subjecting the state of the human heart to a careful study, we can find no satisfactory explanation of this condition, save in the doctrine of the fall. Among contemporaries, I will mention two, from whose works I myself have greatly profited, Julius Müller, and my friend Professor Secrétan. After these explanations relative to the nature of the proof, I come to the proof itself.

II. Presentation of the Proof.

The establishing of a scientific demonstration may, as we have just said, require the lapse of much time. But, as the partisans of every new doctrine might equally appeal to the future, science can take no notice of such an appeal. To succeed in calling public attention seriously to any new theory, it is necessary to show at once that it accounts for certain great facts; as, for example, Copernicus showed immediately that his theory accounted for the succession of day and night, and the changes of the seasons. We will, therefore, now reproduce our solution, and then present some arguments which, without

demonstrating it completely, may yet render it quite probable.

In the presence of the absolute moral law we discover a principle of evil in every heart, that is to say, in the heart of humanity. This principle of evil is essential in humanity. We are not all, however, scoundrels and thieves; there are men whom the instinct of shame and the law of chastity preserve from sensual indulgence; there are men who remain sober; there are generous and compassionate men; but a principle of evil exists in all of us, in that we are all naturally inclined to violate moral law. Moral law requires that each individual shall have for his object the general good of all, in which good each finds his legitimate share. From the stand-point of social morality, we call honest that man who uses his liberty without directly infringing on the rights of others; but a man may be honest in the eyes of society without being good in the eyes of the moral law; for the law requires not only to refrain from wronging others, from stealing, from killing, from calumniating; it also exacts the consecration of each individual to the general good of the whole. Now, in studying the human heart we recognize in it a tendency that is constant in the present state of things, to an excessive love of self, which is the very root of evil. Pascal says: "We are born unjust, for each tends to himself. This is con-

Restatement of the author's position.

trary to all order; we ought to tend to the general; the tendency to self is the commencement of all disorder."

Such is my affirmation. I say not that all are malefactors; but I affirm, that there is in every man a principle of egotism which is the essence of sin. Whence this evil principle? From an act of humanity, of which we are all members, in consequence of which act we receive from nature a corrupted heart. Each of us is, as an individual, simply responsible for his personal acts, or, to speak more exactly, for the personal part of his acts. But each of us, in so far as human, has a solidarity in the fall of the human race. This doctrine, as we have admitted, conflicts directly with a certain kind of common sense; but the question is, whether it is with that superficial common sense which judges from first appearances, or with that common sense which is the expression of human reason, and the judge of truth. The following considerations will aid us in deciding this.

Let us indicate some great fact which our theory explains so well, as to show itself worthy, at least, of serious examination. I choose for this purpose the fact of the existence in man of a double nature, a fact which is one of the chief features of the problem which we are studying.

The twofold nature of man.

Observe the manner in which human nature develops itself. A child is born. How does the soul

first manifest itself in connection with the body? Before exercising the power of thought, so far as we can see, the child is brought into contact with the spiritual world by the organs of sentiment, the look, and the accent of its mother. Before understanding, it feels; it feels love, and it is by the heart that it makes its entrance into the world of spirits. Subsequently, by teaching its lips to utter words, the mother brings it into connection with universal tradition. It accepts this tradition, which is for its intelligence what the maternal milk is for its body, and it enters thus into communion with the human race. The child, therefore, begins its life by believing in the good, and in the truth. Hence, the great Teacher of men proposed as a model for the perfect man the *naïve* faith of the child, which doubts neither the love nor the words of its mother. Infancy is pure. Then comes adolescence; and adolescence is the period of noble impulses, high aspirations, and pure desires.

But how sad the change! I appeal to those of you whose soul has been touched by the sweet and melancholy spirit of poesy. If you feel like weeping, however, do not spend your tears on the too-soon-withered rose, on the vanishing mists, on the fading leaves, on the transient spring-time, on the zephyr which passes and returns no more; but shed them for these beautiful flowers of humanity, so often, alas! withered before unfolding,—for the purity of infancy,

His fallen nature is developed first.

and the sacred aspirations of youth. From the very start the gnawing and blighting worm is there. The good shows itself, it is true, but it is only like a fruit immaturely plucked, or blasted in its flower by a hostile breath.* This subject has called forth from the poets many touchingly sad strains.† But others of less noble nature allude to it only with a bitter smile, and speak of the baseless dreams of infancy and the illusions of youth. All admit in some form that evil is in the child from the start, and that in developing itself it triumphs over the good. But some say that the purity of infancy and the noble impulses of youth are thwarted by their contact with our evil world, as if all evil came from without. But whence, then, does this evil world obtain its recruits? How is it that these pure children on coming into society with each other uniformly become such impure adults? Strictly speaking, infancy is not pure, and youth is not holy; but there never was a human being, perhaps, who at the threshold of life did not have day-dreams of purity,

* Il est comme le fruit en naissant arraché,
Ou qu'un souffle ennemi dans sa fleur a séché.—RACINE.

† Oh! quand ce doux passé, quand cet âge sans tache,
Avec sa robe blanche où notre amour s'attache,
Revient dans nos chemins,
On s'y suspend, et puis que de larmes amères
Sur les lambeaux flétris de vos jeunes chimères
Qui vous restent aux mains!—VICTOR HUGO.

love, and holiness. Before doing the evil, we see the good.

By the time the will is developed, therefore, and comes to self-consciousness, that is, when man comes to responsibility, he finds already within himself a double nature. It is because of this fact that the smile which attends the sight of a little child is almost always tinged with melancholy. We fear for the little candidate of life not only the varied accidents of existence, but we also have a presentiment of the struggles and sufferings which the yet innocent little creature will have to endure, in proportion as the fallen nature within it comes to development. It would be easy to multiply citations from literature in support of these thoughts. I might cite the Apostle Paul, and, for such as would not prefer that authority, the Roman poet, Ovid. I might quote from the Christian, Racine, and for those of different tastes, from the Greek, Euripides, or even from Voltaire. I would find every-where in human letters the evidence of this double nature which exists in each of us. We perceive on the one hand an order in which our better nature delights; on the other, we groan under the heavy burden of a disordered nature which weighs upon our will.

Confirmatory citations.

> Our life is a false nature; 'tis not in
> The harmony of things—this hard decree,
> This ineradicable taint of sin,
> This boundless upas, this all-blasting tree,

Whose root is earth, whose leaves and branches be
The skies which rain their plagues on men like dew—
Disease, death, bondage—all the woes we see—
And, worse, the woes we see not—which throb through
The immedicable souls with heartaches ever new.*

A single sentence of Pascal sums up all these thoughts: "There are two natures within us, the one good, the other evil." But without accumulating citations, I prefer to appeal to your daily experience. That there are within us two natures, the conflicts of which often rend our hearts, no one denies.

Our solution explains this great fact. Every time that a new representative of our common humanity appears as a candidate of life, the true use and purpose of his liberty is clearly enough shown to him by conscience. The golden dream is experienced; the celestial Eden is caught sight of. But this is the work of that part of our nature which God made, of that primitive constitution of the soul which makes itself felt at the very outset of life. The other phase of our nature, the evil, is the man as made by humanity; it is the sad creation of the creature, the result of the common fall. We have now the means of explaining the presence of these two natures.

Why the fallen nature gains the upper hand.

We have also the means of explaining why the evil nature gains the upper hand in the development of life. In fact, it results directly

* Childe Harold.

from the idea of the fall, namely, that the human will is not in its normal condition. Liberty, as we have said, realizes and confirms itself in giving itself to the good; but it enfeebles and ruins itself in giving itself to evil; and for the reason that the good is our law, whereas evil is foreign and hostile to the constitution of the soul. Though man possesses the inestimable gift of liberty, which renders him capable of the good and of happiness, yet in itself it is an empty gift, and has no other alternative than either to become the free servant of justice by the practice of the good, or to become, by yielding to evil, the slave of sin. The revolt of humanity has, therefore, resulted not only in vitiating the human heart by making it the seat of evil solicitations, but also in paralyzing the will.

Our solution, therefore, accounts for the evil principle which observation discovers in the heart. What other solution does as much? Evil is there; it is essential in humanity, and cannot be accounted for by individual historic volitions. But whence comes it? Will you say that it is necessary? But this is to deny it; it is not to solve the problem, it is to destroy one of its terms. Will you refer it back to an eternal principle? but this is dualism, a system which the advance of human thought has long since renounced. What alternative is then left? To seek the origin of evil in God? But this

Restatement of position.

we cannot. We must, therefore, seek the origin of evil in an act of humanity. Such is the substance of my proof. I consider as worthy of serious examination every solution of the problem which will free God from the responsibility of evil, without recurring to the idea of a nature of things, which would be a second principle co-eternal with God; but I know no other than the one I propose which has this character, and hence I shall cling to it until the discovery of some new light, the probability of which, however, I do not suppose.

We have settled at the outset the two principles, that the good is that which ought to be, that is, that it is identical with the Divine will; and that evil is that which ought not to be, that is, that it is the contrary of the Divine will. To maintain these two definitions intact is for me the test of every theory of evil that presents itself. To reject every theory which conflicts with the moral law, or a faith in God's holiness, is my uniform rule. Is there any other solution than the one I propose which does not violate this rule, and which at the same time accounts for the totality of facts which observation reveals? Let us see.

Do you say that the moral law and God are mere speculative ideas? and that the matter in hand is not to discover a new doctrine in justification of preconceived theories, but to explain facts? Let us then

examine this thought; and, back of what you call theories, let us go directly to the most positive of facts. The conception of the moral law is neither more nor less than the expression of a fact, namely, the fact of the sentiment of obligation, the consciousness of duty. Our faith in the holiness of God is also the expression of a fact, namely, the fact of the profound heartfelt need of worshiping. Try to suppress the feeling of moral obligation, which is the basis of all moral and social order; undertake to suppress the instinct of worship, which is the basis of all religions; silence that voice which, in the presence of the good, utters an approbation, and in the presence of evil, a blame; silence that voice which in the presence of some great injustice rises often, even in those who pretend to disbelieve in God, and makes appeal to a Supreme Justice; silence all these voices if you can, and we will admit that the moral law, and God, are nothing but theories. But this cannot be; for the consciousness of duty, and of a divine order, are fundamental elements of our nature. To maintain the moral law, and the holiness of God, is to maintain two ideas which are the immediate and direct expression of facts.

Psychological facts are as real as physical facts.

But we meet here a certain form of science which treats this class of facts with disdain, stigmatizing them as matters of sentiment. French Positivism de-

clared the other day, by the mouth of its disciple, M. Littré, that science recognizes nothing but matter and the properties of matter. German Materialism declares, through Professor Büchner, that "it is impossible long to resist the force of facts." Now, in the opinion of these writers, the conscience, the instinct of worship, and, in general, all spiritual phenomena, *are not facts;* there are no other realities than those which fall under our senses. If they had said, the science of matter recognizes nothing but matter and the properties of matter, they would only have said a commonplace truism; but their real purpose is to force upon the public the notion that the science of matter and its properties is the sole and universal science. They hold that all that exists is either matter or properties of matter.

Positivism criticised.

Let us examine this. The properties of matter exist only under condition that matter exists, and it exists only under the conditions of form and weight. Please then tell me what is the form of honor, and what is the exact weight of infamy. By what instruments shall we determine the geometrical dimensions of generosity, and measure, in all its details, the shape of selfishness? What confusion of ideas we are involved in, what thick darkness we must call up, if we would so far succeed in quenching the natural light which enlightens every man who comes into the world, as to concede that vice and virtue,

honor and probity, devotion and esteem, contempt and censure, admiration and horror, are either matter or the properties of matter, or—nothing! Let us now return to the declaration of Büchner, for it contains a direct condemnation of the very materialism which has placed it in our hands. "It is impossible long to resist the force of facts!" It is for this very reason that humanity will never consent to erase from their place in science those realities which are the most direct manifestations of life, realities which man knows more immediately than he knows matter; for matter reveals itself to our senses only under the condition of the presence and action of his spiritual nature.

But we hear it affirmed that the science of our age is inclining more and more to materialism. I think, on the contrary, that it is already on the point of getting out of it, and that the darkness of which men complain is only that final obscurity of the night which usually seems more dense just before the break of day.* I might mention, as a favorable sign of the times, the general interest which the discussion of moral questions now excites in every intelligent community, an interest which does not indicate any

* M. Félix Ravaisson has just signalized, in contemporary philosophy, "a general movement of thought tending to get the mastery once again, and from a higher stand-point than ever before, of the doctrines of materialism."

great success of materialism in persuading the world that the conscience and the heart, sin and holiness, are objects unworthy of the serious attention of reason.

III. Solution of Difficulties.

Let us now examine some difficulties connected with the solution of the problem of evil which I have proposed. Our object has been to find a system which, while satisfying reason, shall maintain and safeguard the conscience. Now, at first sight our solution seems to conflict both with conscience and with reason. Let us notice, first, the rational difficulties.

How can evil spring from innocence!

It is impossible, say some, to conceive of sin as originating in a state of innocence. That we ourselves do evil, however, is perfectly easy to understand, as we are a prey to the solicitations of our evil heart, and to the temptations of sense and vanity under all their phases. Evil being already in our heart, we naturally yield to its seductions; but take evil out of the heart, and you can never explain how the will should deviate from the good. The good, in fact, exerts of itself an attraction. To overbalance this attraction there must be a temptation resulting from the pre-existence of evil. Without a temptation the fall cannot be explained; and to admit a primitive state of innocence is to exclude all tempta-

tion, and, consequently, to exclude the possibility of evil. Such is the first objection we meet.

I have no intention of answering the objection by proposing an abstract definition of liberty, in saying that the will, being free, is able, from this very fact, to determine itself for the evil without any solicitation. I concede that, in the absence of all temptation, sin is inexplicable. What course is then left for me? It must be shown that there exists, in a state of entire purity of heart, a temptation that is inherent in the will, and which cannot be suppressed save by suppressing the will itself; so that on the admission of the freedom of the will, and of absolute purity of heart, this temptation, but this alone, must also be admitted. Now, this temptation does exist. But what is it? The temptation of liberty.

The temptation of liberty.

A free created power is, as a power, conscious of originating actions; but as a creature, it cannot be in a state of absolute independence; it finds itself in the presence of universal law, or rather of God, whose will the law expresses. Now from this very situation, there results for the created power the temptation to ignore the consequences of its position as a creature, and, rejecting the law which subordinates it to God, to become a law unto itself. This is the temptation to revolt, pure and simple. Is this incomprehensible? By no means. Is this temptation impossible? Far from it; it is real, it exists in us now. This tempta-

tion is, in its simple form, vailed and, as it were, choked, beneath the enormous mass of other temptations in our fallen nature; and when we do evil it is more frequently because we yield to the impulses of a vitiated nature. Still, we can yet recognize, feeble though its influence may be in our present state, the temptation of independence *per se.*

Take this illustration. You desire to do a certain act. Some one, who has no legitimate authority over you, comes and arrogantly commands you to do the very thing you were intending to do. Now, what is the result? Almost certainly you will rebel against this undue command; and you will quite likely, if not wisely, at least very naturally, renounce doing what you intended to do, and do something which you had no desire to do, simply to vindicate your independence. Your resistance will be legitimate in this case, as the command is illegitimate. But this spirit of independence exists, likewise, in the presence of the legitimate authority of conscience and God. And this is so true that many young persons who would disdainfully repel certain temptations if they were directly presented to them, yet become victims to the diabolical cunning of those who awaken in them the spirit of independence in order to lead them, little by little, to do that for which they originally had a horror. Forbidden fruit is of savory taste.

Discard this notion of the temptation of liberty,

and evil is no longer possible. But where evil is not possible, there liberty is not possible. The elementary form of liberty, under which it must begin, and out of which it must rise to its perfect form by overcoming the possibility of evil, presupposes the power of choice. Take away this power of choosing between obedience and revolt, and you have suppressed the freedom of the creature. It has sometimes been asked why God did not create a being which could not sin, that is to say, which should be good necessarily. Those who so ask forget that necessity excludes liberty, and that where there is no liberty there can be neither good nor evil, so that the notion of a being necessarily good involves an absolute contradiction of terms.

Is this temptation of liberty avoidable?

We explain the primitive fall, therefore, by a temptation which is the sole one unavoidably inherent in a free being, as, also, the sole one which can exist in a state of innocence: that is to say, the sole one which can find an echo in a will associated with a pure heart. This temptation may be thus expressed: "Thou shalt be a God unto thyself." No other temptation can come until after this one, that is, until after the will shall have already enfeebled itself by yielding to the temptation which is inherent in liberty itself. It was in view of this that Milton, when attempting to go back to the first origin of evil, assigned, as the motive of the archangel's rebellion, the aspiring to a position

in which he should be a law unto himself, the wishing to be free from the authority of the Creator. In this he showed himself a good philosopher as well as poet.

But I hear some one object: There, you have evil, after all, at the very beginning of things; you make evil inherent in the creature in its character of creature! No, we do not have evil, but only its possibility, a possibility which is, we repeat it, the condition of created liberty. Liberty presupposes possible evil, and contains a temptation without which liberty could not exist; but the sufficient cause of realized evil exists nowhere—save in a will rebelling against its law. All confusion on this point may be saved by recalling the saying of Shakspeare:

This liberty is not a germ of evil.

> 'Tis one thing to be tempted,
> Another thing to fall.*

There is, therefore, a temptation inherent in liberty independently of any evil proclivity of the heart. Our solution, in this respect, appears as perfectly reasonable; and, on close examination, it becomes even quite evident. I would be glad if I could say as much of the point which follows.

When we once have admitted that the fall of a free being is possible in a state of innocence, a new difficulty, more formidable than the first, rises in the face of reason, and seems to bar its way. We repeat, that our solution does not affirm that a first man, or that a

* *Measure for Measure*, Act II, Scene 1.

first human pair, render themselves guilty of a purely individual sin, and that then other individuals, others in the true and absolute sense of the word, bear the consequences of this sin, which is not their own. If our solution meant this it would be false. It does not affirm that we all participated individually in this first sin, and yet it does affirm that we did participate really in the common fall; humanity revolted, and is now bearing the consequences of its revolt. In this sense only is our solution reconcilable with justice; or, to speak more correctly, our solution alone permits the reconciliation of the idea of justice with the facts which experience reveals. There are not two justices; it is one of the severest things that can be reproached to Pascal, that he held (without mature reflection, doubtless) that there are two forms of justice, human and divine. There is but one justice, that of God; and this justice we see in brighter light the more we study it. We are accustomed to appeal from the injustice of men to the justice of God; but to wish to separate the justice of God from the justice of the conscience would be to precipitate ourselves inevitably either into atheism or into fanaticism. Our solution does not depend, therefore, on a particular definition of justice; there is but one justice, that which Cicero has defined thus: "To concede to each his rights." But our solution turns on this point:

In what sense all men participated in the primitive fall.

Turning-point of the solution.

namely, is each individual of the race *other* than his fellows in an exclusive and absolute sense? Or is it true that there is in each man both a personal existence, and also the existence of humanity? We do not mean that humanity is to be regarded as a being apart from the individuals; but we hold that each man unites in himself two realities, which are distinct without being separate, and thus presents a double aspect: namely, in so far as he is himself in his personal existence, and in so far as he is man by the presence of humanity in him. After these explanations let us approach the difficulty.

The difficulty is, How are we to be made in any sense responsible for the primitive fall of our race? You will now object that we have no recollection of this primitive revolt; you object, even, that we had no existence at the time when it occurred, and that, if the race fell at all, it occurred surely before we appeared on the stage of action; and, hence, you are tempted to say with the lamb of La Fontaine: "How could I have done it if I was not yet born?"

Did we all exist in the first human pair?

You did not exist? in no sense? is that beyond all question? The difficulty being the same for every object that lives, let us examine it in the case of a vegetable. I will take, for example, one of our forest pines. Whence springs it? Its present substance came evidently from the soil and the atmosphere, through a series of organic

changes. Recently the people of Geneva heard Professor Candolle explain, in the light of recent physics, the entire development of a vegetable from the moment when germination commences. He explained to us the growth of the plant; but under what condition? Under condition that the plant is already there, living in its germ. Now, the germ of the plant is not the result of movements in matter; a living germ is not an aggregate of particles, like a stone or crystal. Before developing itself, therefore, our pine existed in its germ. But whence came this germ? Did God create it directly? Does God create directly, every year, the infinitude of germs which are scattered abroad in the whole vegetable kingdom? In view of the uniformity with which the same plant produces unceasingly seed of its own kind, and of the fact that God so uniformly works through second causes, we cannot believe this. No one believes in this infinite multiplication of new creative acts. The germ of the pine, therefore, existed in the pine which produced it, and this in another, and so on from pine to pine, back to the origin of the species. But how, and in what sense did it exist? Philosophers say that the germ exists *potentially* in the life of the individual which reproduces its kind. But what shall we understand by this word *potentially?* Shall we attribute to the vegetable a will, and suppose that it creates the germ? No one

Analogy of a vegetable pre-existing in its species.

thinks so. The germ exists before it appears; and what we call vital force in this case does not create, but simply develops that which already was. But how are we to conceive of this? Shall we suppose that the whole number of living individuals existed infinitely small in the first germ? Shall we assume that the first pine-seed of all, the origin of all other pines, past, present, and future, having been opened, and placed under a microscope of infinite power, would have revealed all the pines of the world shut up as in a box? You smile; and, if we admit the indefinite reproduction of individuals, metaphysics justifies your smile. For, in fact, this would require the presence in the first germ of an indefinite number of real entities; now, every number being essentially determinate, an indefinite number is no number at all. It is certain, however, that our pine existed a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand, no matter how many, years ago, at the very origin of its species. No matter how large the number of real species, our reasoning remains unaffected. The pine existed in its species before its individual manifestation, as we have two reasons for believing. The first is, that as it now exists, and that as it is not a simple aggregate of material particles, and that as it was not created individually, it must, hence, have existed at the origin of its species. The second reason is based on the acknowledged influence of soil and climate in modi-

fying, under condition of the lapse of very long periods of time, the peculiarities of natural species. To account for all the peculiarities of the pine in question, we would have to go back to the influence of soil and climate, and of astronomical and geological facts which took place countless centuries in the past. Our pine was being modified at that remote epoch; it must, therefore, have then existed, for it could be modified only on condition of then existing. But how did it exist? How does a vegetable exist in its species? In form and substance? No; unless it existed all formed and in miniature, a supposition which we have excluded. Nevertheless, it is impossible for us to conceive of the existence of a vegetable save under the double condition of form and substance. The pine, therefore, existed in a manner to us incomprehensible. This is simply one of the mysteries of all life.

It exists, but in a manner incomprehensible to us.

Let us come, now, to the application of our illustration. Before it existed individually, the tree existed in its species, but in a manner which we do not understand. Likewise, also, man before his personal manifestation existed in humanity. But how? In a manner which we do not understand. We conceive of the existence of a vegetable only as possessing form and substance, and yet reason leads us to admit that it exists in its species without form or substance. We conceive of the existence of a man only as an

individual, and yet we are forced to admit that there is for him, in humanity, another mode of existence. It is with him the same as with the pine. One of you says he is twenty years old; another, thirty, fifty, sixty. This is your date as an individual; but, as to your date as man, you have no other than that of humanity itself—you are all of you much older than you think.

The objection to our solution arising from the thought that we did not exist at the time of the supposed fall of the race, disappears as soon as we admit the existence of each in humanity, not as an individual, but as man. But, in order to the admission of a more than merely ideal reality of the species, it is necessary to overcome the whole weight of appearances, as well as of an easily accepted popular philosophy, which has appearances in its favor. And, then, it is necessary to be satisfied with a conception of pure reason, which affirms the reality of the species without being able to call imagination to its support. Without entering upon all the difficulties of the subject, let it suffice here to cite the counterbalancing fact, that some of the most illustrious representatives of reason have found the difficulty to be the very opposite of that which we here consider. Individuals pass away, but the species remains. Where are the oaks which shadowed our fathers? Where, in a few years, will be

So is man's existence in the species real, though incomprehensible.

the birds which sing in our forests? the sheep, and the cattle of our fields? Every thing dies, and disappears from the surface of the earth; but the species remain: the oak, the ox, the horse, still continue, notwithstanding the incessant destruction of the individuals which represent them. Several philosophers have been so vividly struck with this consideration, that for them the reality of the species was the overshadowing fact, while the existence of individuals seemed problematical.

But I think I hear some of you accusing me of reasoning very poorly. "Comparisons are not proofs," say you. "What has this pine to do here? If you mean that we have existed from the origin of humanity in a metaphysical sense, as every living thing exists in its species, very well; but this metaphysical existence does not touch the question; for what concerns us is moral responsibility, which is not imputed to the pines. Surely we did not exist before our birth in a form which involves moral responsibility. The moral difficulty, therefore, still remains, that we suffer for a fault which is foreign to us; and that is unjust." Here, therefore, after the difficulty of the reason, we encounter an objection of conscience; it merits our most earnest attention.

A moral difficulty.

The basis of the objection is, that acts of volition are exclusively individual, and that the responsibility which attends them is of the same character. Let

us examine these two ideas, bearing in mind that the individual character of volitions as well as of responsibility is to remain absolutely intact, even should it not be exclusive. While engaged in placing in relief one of the phases of a double truth, we do not desire in any degree to deny the other, or throw it into the shade. But is it true that volition manifests itself only under a purely individual form? There are some reasons for doubting it; I shall indicate three.

Are volitions exclusively individual?

If we are to believe the words of lovers, the sentiment which animates them has the effect to melt two wills into one, to cause the will to cease in some degree to be purely personal, the two concurrent souls forming a sort of unity. Persons unaccustomed to the vivacity of the passions might be tempted to question the testimony of lovers; but serious writers, grave observers of human nature, likewise affirm that deep feelings of love and friendship diminish, so to speak, the separation of souls, taking from their volitions, not, of course, their individual nature, but the exclusive character of that individuality. This is my first remark.

The working of love.

The second is this: When a man advances alone in the presence of a hostile army, when he braves certain death to secure an advantage for his fellows, he is proclaimed a hero. In the assault of a redoubt, and in some other military move-

Of enthusiasm.

ments, an entire *corps* is sometimes sent to certain death, *as bait for the cannon*, and in many cases the victims know where they are going. These poor fellows are swept down by hundreds, and their bodies are thrown into forgotten ditches. Their action is none the less heroic because they were many, though very few or none of them would have had the courage to do alone that which, in a body, they did without hesitation. This fact is well known and excites no astonishment. It results, we are wont to say, from the power of emulation, from example, from association of action. It is doubtless all that; but what does that mean? It means that the concurrence of volitions creates a power which would not exist if these same volitions were isolated. In the accomplishment of a collective action, there is, therefore, a power which manifests itself in each individual, but whose source, however, is not purely individual; otherwise, the collection of individuals would not have greater power, or courage, than the sum of their personal volitions. But all know that this is not the case; all admit, without, perhaps, weighing the significance of the fact, that concurrence of forces is additional potency.

And here is my third remark: In the phenomena of habit, we see the will creating a new nature. It is, in the first place, the person that produces the nature, and then the nature that determines the

Of habit.

acts of the person, (I borrow expressions from St. Augustine). Now, in this power of habit, we have an instance of a will manifesting itself, no longer exclusively under an individual form, for the individual feels this power of habit as something foreign to himself, although proceeding primitively from him; and this new nature, formed by habit, transmits itself hereditarily from one individual to others, and loses thus the personal character of its origin.

I submit to you these observations, which it will be easy to illustrate by other examples. There exist moral phenomena, obscure and little studied, which enable us to catch a glimpse, as through vails of mist, of an element of volition whose form is not exclusively individual.

Is responsibility exclusively individual?

The idea of responsibility calls forth similar reflections. The notion that responsibility is purely and exclusively individual vanishes at once on serious reflection. You influence one of your fellows by words, by example, by looks; and you lead him into evil. You know well enough that you are responsible for those words, acts, and looks. But you know also that you have likewise a share of responsibility in the act itself of him whom you influenced to turn aside from the line of duty. Consider carefully that which, in judicial matters, are called extenuating circumstances. These extenuating circumstances, which our jurymen sometimes mis-

use, are, nevertheless, a serious reality. Can we justly disregard them in our moral judgments? A poor girl, born in dens of vice, and raised in the midst of infamy, is hardly to be regarded as so deeply guilty, should she fall into a disorderly life, as a better raised young woman would be held, for the same conduct. Does not a part of her guilt belong to those who perverted her? If a boy, raised in habits of begging and theft, should afterward deviate from the laws of strict probity, would he be in the same degree guilty as a well-raised son, who, in order to yield to temptation, would have to trample under foot the maxims of his father and the example of his mother? Evil influences are often an exculpation, as no one denies. Now the exculpating of one is always the accusing of another; to extenuate the wrong of an act by the consideration of evil counsels given and bad examples followed, is to throw back upon the authors of the evil counsels and bad examples, that share of the responsibility which is thrown off from the agent. There are, therefore, in the same act different concurrent responsibilities; responsibility is not exclusively individual. This is a weighty thought; it addresses itself directly to the conscience. Follow out the consequences of one of your acts, or words. You exert a bad influence in a certain place to-day, and to-morrow this influence is extending itself; thus your responsibility is implicated in actions which shall be committed afar off,

and after a long lapse of time; in these actions your share will be real.

Far from being exclusively personal, responsibility presents on the contrary such connections with the past and future as may well give occasion to earnest meditation. Xavier de Maistre, an eye-witness of the horrors of the retreat from Russia, exclaims, while recording the fearful destiny of the French: "I did not see a single one of them without thinking of that infernal man who had led them into such extremes of misfortune." I do not wish to blunt the point of this sharpened arrow; Bonaparte was doubtless the first in responsibility for the disasters of his army. But trace out the origins of the great misfortune: ask yourselves who had brought Napoleon to power, and thus tempted him to seek military glory as a necessity of his position; and, without excusing his excessive ambition, you will see that the responsibility distributes itself back over long and multiplied cross-currents of history.

Illustration from the disasters of the invasion of Russia.

Responsibility, and volitions which are its condition, are not, therefore, facts of an exclusively individual nature. Every act is essentially personal in its accomplishment, but no act is exclusively personal in its origins. These considerations open for our solution the door which seemed closed against it. The imputation of the common fall will

The objections disappear.

assume a character of justice as soon as we admit that, while preserving the personal part of our responsibility, which is undeniable, we may also participate in the collective responsibility of the race.

The idea of justice presented itself as an objection. Now, if there were any injustice, is it our doctrine that is responsible for it? By no means. The injustice would be in the facts, which our doctrine simply seeks to explain. This is easily enough seen from a glance at the great law of human *solidarity*. The one suffers from the faults of the other; one enjoys the favorable results of the good actions of another. The distribution of goods and of evils is not of an exclusively individual character. It is not our doctrine which speaks thus; it is the voice of facts; and none can dispute their number and importance. I will call to witness on this subject a justly celebrated man, one occupied with an entirely different order of thoughts from those which now engage our attention. I open the works of Frédéric Bastiat. This economist discusses the laws of the production and distribution of wealth. Here are some of the thoughts which he pens. After remarking that the idea of solidarity was rejected by the philosophy of the eighteenth century, and made the object of the raillery of Voltaire, he thus proceeds: "But that at which Voltaire mocked is a fact as incontestable as it is mysterious. Why is this man rich? Because

The law of human solidarity.

his father was active, upright, laborious, economical; the father practiced the virtues, his son gathers the advantages. Why is that other man suffering, sick, feeble, fearful, and unhappy? Because his father, gifted with a powerful constitution, misused it in debauch and excess. There is not a man in the world whose condition has not been affected by millions of facts to which his own volitions are foreign. This ill of which I complain to-day was caused, perhaps, by a caprice of my great-grandfather, etc., etc. We discover solidarity on a still grander scale, and at distances more inexplicable, when we consider the relations of different nations, or of different generations of the same nation. Look at our public loans. We declare war, we obey barbarous passions, we destroy thereby precious resources, and we discover the means of throwing the burden of this destruction upon our sons, who, perhaps, will have a horror of war, and be unable to understand our contentious passions. Civil society entire is but a totality of interwoven solidarities. There is, therefore, naturally and to a certain positive degree, undeniable solidarity among men. In other terms *responsibility is not exclusively personal.*"

The moral phase of human solidarity.

Bastiat shows the law of solidarity in its contributions to the progress of social harmony; we are here to consider, however, its darker phase. There exists, then, a general law,

which observation confirms more and more: the law of solidarity. And while social science is continually placing it in brighter light, our increasing civilization is incessantly contributing to its far-reaching applications. The consequences of a war among savages extend but little beyond the forests that witnessed it. In the civilized world, however, war cannot break out in one point without affecting the interests of the whole society of nations.

Human justice has for its device, and properly so, to render to each individual his dues, and to inflict punishment on the head of the solely guilty one. It aims to reach this point as far as possible, but it is unable to reach it absolutely; the nature of things forbids it. For what being, indeed, is so isolated that the sword of the law may strike him, or justice seal him with the stamp of infamy, without causing others by his side to suffer also?

Human justice necessarily imperfect.

We seek in vain to touch but one individual; the individuals are never isolated; he who touches one touches also another.

Solidarity is, therefore, a very general law. Shall we consider it of an evil nature? Let us examine our conduct. Death enters a certain house. Visitors repair thither. I do not mean visits of ceremony; friends repair to the house. But to do what? To bear their share in the suffering of others; for if sympathy solaces, it solaces only

Beneficent working of moral solidarity.

by dividing the suffering. Alexandre Vinet well expresses this thought when he says: "Two hearts, when united, can brave misfortune; *it*, at least, is common to both of them; it falls on each with but half its force."*

The significance of compassion, therefore, is, that one offers on the score of another. Now, is compassion a wrong activity of the human heart? Is what we call a tender heart, a bad heart? The Stoic philosophers thought so. They may have been personally kind and compassionate men; their writings command beneficence; but their doctrine affirms that the true sage retires entirely within himself, and, to use their own expression, that he becomes round and polished like a ball of steel, experiencing no influence from without. Can you thus think? can you place

* The last three lines of these stanzas:

Vois ce vieux chêne abattu par l'orage
Et sur la terre étendu sans feuillage.
Il était seul; le voilà sous nos pieds.
Vois ces ormeaux qui joignent leur ombrage,
Des aquilons ils ont bravé la rage;
Ils étaient deux; ils se sont appuyés.

Dans le malheur ainsi courbant la tête,
Tu céderas aux coups de la tempête
Si près de toi tu n'as pas un ami.
Deux cœurs unis affrontent l'infortune;
A tous les deux au moins elle est commune
Et sur chacun ne frappe qu'à demi.

compassion among the unhealthy qualities of the soul? You cannot.

And what of sacrifice? Leonidas dies for Greece; Winkelried sacrifices himself for Switzerland. But let us descend from the sphere of great men. This poor laborer, who scarcely finds in his ordinary life sufficient time for sleep, devotes a portion of his already too short nights to advancing the work of his companion enfeebled by disease. That poor mother toils day and night to pay the debts of her son—debts contracted, perhaps, in a life of disorder. All devoted hearts, all those who practice the virtue of sacrifice, bear the burdens of others: is this wrong? Note now that it is precisely this fact which is declared to be unjust, namely, that one should suffer because of another.

But I hear you saying within yourself, There is a sophism in this. Devotion is beautiful and good because it is voluntary; but it is manifestly unjust that one should suffer on account of another without willing it. My reasoning, however, is not so illogical as you think. We must learn whether the fact that one suffers for another, taken in itself and independently of our will, is good or evil. If it is evil *per se*, then our intention may be pure, but the object of our volition is evil; that which we intend with an upright motive is yet the realization of injustice. Compassion and devotion would then be

To suffer for others is not unjust.

instances of perverted conscience. Now, while a certain class of persons think, or at least say, that devotion is folly, yet to lay down as a scientific maxim that the fulfillment of the law of charity is the expression of a perverted conscience, is what no sound mind would consent to do. We, therefore, see, not only, that solidarity exists in fact, and is revealed to observation as a fundamental law of society, but also that we voluntarily practice this law as often as we enter upon works of charity: and charity is good. My conclusion, therefore, is, that if the practice of this law is good it must also be just, for there is no goodness without justice.

Let us understand ourselves well. The question here is as to that absolute morality which binds us to the divine law, and not as to that judicial morality which fixes the mutual rights of individuals. As bearing on the mutual rights of individuals, the characteristic of charity is to transcend justice, to do voluntarily more than is required. If a beggar demand your help as his right, you may, with all justice, show him the door and close your purse. But in the presence of the absolute law of God, we never do, in the accomplishment of duty, more than we are bound to do, or than is required by absolute justice. It is in God only that charity transcends justice; or, to speak more strictly, there is in God no distinction between justice and charity, because he owes nothing

to his creatures other than the voluntary debt of his free and eternal love. All that proceeds from God is, as to us, grace, pure grace. All that proceeds from us, as related to God and to the law which expresses his will, is simply duty and justice. In the deep and true sense of the word, therefore, that charitableness which bears the burdens of others, is simply a manifestation of justice. But how can this be so, unless it be because we are not individually segregated from each other in an absolute sense, and because there exists among us a bond, a fundamental union—that is to say, because the human race forms a real though mysterious unity? Aside from this thought there is no justice in the law of solidarity.

The law of solidarity implies a more than ideal unity of mankind.

Should this reasoning appear too subtle, perhaps the following may be more simple. The solidarity of mankind is a fact. It is not only actual, in the sense that we suffer or derive joy from the acts of our contemporaries; but it is also hereditary: we experience in good, as in evil, the consequences of actions committed by generations past; and future generations will reap the heritage which our conduct is sowing for them. These are facts of experience which no one can contest. Now, no one undergoes *justly* the moral consequences of acts which he did not accomplish: such is an axiom of conscience. We are forced, therefore, to choose between these two alternatives:

either, we suffer for the faults of beings from whom we are totally and absolutely separated—and in this case injustice would be at the foundation of the universe, sin cesolidarity is a general fact—or the human race is, under the diversity of its individuals, so connected in a real unity, that there springs justly therefrom, for us, a collective responsibility in addition to our personal responsibility. Such is the alternative from which we are forced to choose, unless we give up all hope of solving the problem. But to admit that injustice is at the foundation of the universe, is to violate reason and to destroy conscience. We are, therefore, forced to the admission of a human unity, of a collective responsibility; and we accept it, notwithstanding its obscurities, as the sole view which reconciles experience and reason, the facts of life and the utterances of conscience.

Human individuals are distinct, but they are not separate. Isolation is the watch-word of Cain; and it is also the cold word which once fell from Rousseau when he wrote: "What matters to me what becomes of the wicked! I take little interest in their fate."

Solidarity in conflict with selfishness.

But the supreme law of the spiritual world, charity, does not speak as Cain and Rousseau. Charity practices two maxims. The first is this: Render to each the consequences of his own acts; none can throw his own faults upon others. This is a clear oracle of conscience. Charity conforms itself

thereto, for true charity is just, and it cannot be truly good save in being just. The second maxim is this: We are many, and yet we are one. At this point the heart outruns the reason; and to arrive at the truth in the case, we only need to reduce to theory the practice of the heart. Pascal has said: "The heart has its reasons which the reason understands not;" but it is the fault of the reason, for an essential part of its duty is to fathom the reasons of the heart.

Place yourself in front of an edifice in construction, and observe the manifold stones, designed for it, lying about you. You will often notice on these stones, certain marks intended to designate the place of each of these fragments in the unity of the rising edifice. Now, we are all stones for an edifice, and the heart is the mark which fixes our destination. Our diverse individualities are to conciliate themselves in the harmony of a whole, that is, in a unity. God designs that we should be free and responsible persons; but he also designs us to form a spiritual communion, which is as real as the individuals; since it also, as well as the individuals, is willed by God, and since the will of God is the supreme expression for that which is and for that which ought to be.

Two fundamental phases of human life.

We have, therefore, to accept and to maintain two truths: first, our personal existence with all its consequences, the most important of which being, that no one can throw off the responsi-

bility of his voluntary acts; and, secondly, our collective existence with all its consequences, the most important of which being, that we ought to bear each other's burdens. The one of these truths, our personality, we see perfectly clearly, and, in many cases, only too clearly. But the other is obscure to us: we do not clearly discern the spiritual edifice in view of which we exist, and which is to realize the fundamental unity of our nature. But why so? I do not presume to lift the vail entirely, but only, if possible, to brush it aside a little. Why, then, do we not see this second truth? Is it not egotism, that primitive form of sin, that is here also the essential cause of our error? And is it not the elevating influence of devotion and sacrifice—that is, of those elements of charity that we yet retain—that dissipates, in some degree, our darkness? Do we not accept solidarity in the limits and in the proportion of our love? The members of a united family accept and practice, without thinking it strange, the solidarity which binds them together. The citizen, when animated by warm patriotism, raises not the least doubt as to the legitimacy of the bond which attaches him to his nation. Is it not safe to assume that in growing in charity we will grow in the truth, and that we will succeed in understanding our solidarity in the fall in proportion as we accept the work, proposed to each of us, of being laborers in the common work of the restoration of the human race?

Our solution of the problem of evil rests on two principal ideas, that of liberty, and that of solidarity. Up to our own day, philosophy has too often ignored the rights of liberty, which alone constitute the reality and dignity of spirits. But one of the chief currents of contemporary thought is now tending to lead men into the opposite error, and to occasion the ignoring of the law of solidarity, which expresses the essence of the spiritual unity of mankind. Writers seem frequently to confound man's individual existence with a mere individualism which is contrary to the nature of things. "*Individuality*," says Vinet, "is not *individualism*. The latter refers every thing to self, sees in every thing nothing but self; individuality consists simply in wishing to be one's self in order to be something. Individualism and individuality are two sworn enemies: the former is the obstacle and negation of all society; the latter is that to which society owes all that it has of savor, of life, and of reality." It is our duty to separate ourselves from the evil current of humanity, and to become personal and conscient beings, not in order to remain isolated, but in order to re-enter freely into communion with spiritualized society. Each is to become a personal self, not in order to keep himself for himself, but in order to consecrate himself to the common good of all, in harmony with the plan of the universal Father.

The solution based on the two ideas of liberty and solidarity.

The errors of hobbyists.

Socialists and Individualists, drawn up in opposite camps, contend, in the schools and in the world, with the disjointed fragments of truth. The fact is, the normal development of society promotes more and more the complete formation of true individuals, for society is not an aggregate, a simple collection, but a spiritual organism formed of wills which control and unite themselves in a common purpose. On the other hand, the individual cannot exist in isolation, but develops himself normally and harmoniously only in realizing by his freedom the law of solidarity. Harmony, as Pythagoras held, is, in fact, the solution of the enigma of the world.

The Swiss have a beautiful national motto, but it is not to Swiss hearts alone that it speaks. In the solemn moments of our existence it stirs the man within us in his profoundest depths, for it is the expression of the supreme law of the universe: "Each for all; all for each."

LECTURE VI.

THE CONFLICT OF LIFE.

THE title of this lecture will surprise no one. Who, in fact, does not know that life is a conflict? The majority of men are engaged in a constant struggle in order merely to live, to gain their daily bread, and that of their family; they struggle against ever-menacing poverty. Others, free from these material cares, strive for place, for office, in order to obtain fortune or reputation; they seek to triumph over their competitors, to rise above their rivals. All of us seek after happiness; and in this seeking we have to strive daily with cares and chagrins. Thus we succeed in living; then we leave something behind for our children, a fortune greater or less, a reputation more or less good; and then, we are carried to our graves.

The conflict for the good.

But it is not of this conflict, the object of which is comfort and success, that we are to-day to speak, and yet we will not speak of any thing else than of our every-day life; but we will speak of it from a special point of view; we will speak of the *good* conflict, that which is to have for result, not success in the world, but the realization of the laws of the good.

The conflict which we are to engage in against evil is not a normal phase of the development of a spiritual creature; it is not directed against the possibility of evil, for evil is already existant, real and powerful; it has its armies and fortresses, and, worst of all, it has a citadel in the heart of each of us. Evil being already real, there is in the struggle which we have to sustain something to be destroyed, something to be annihilated; and though man may, by the consciousness of performed duty, attain to a feeling of peace, yet he cannot find stable and permanent repose in a world ruled over by disorder. This situation is both astonishing and discouraging; hence, we are sometimes led to shut our eyes to the real condition of life, and to try to persuade ourselves that there is not after all so much to do. "Indifference, indolence, the love of ease, and, above all, trembling cowardice—such are the influences that blind and corrupt the feeble consciences of so many men who go about crying with feigned security, *Peace, peace! when there is no peace.* They are fearful of labor, of conflict, of every thing except that which they ought to fear. But I tell you there is an Eye, whose glance falls from on high as a malediction on these sluggards. For what, then, can they believe themselves to have been born? God did not place man upon this earth to repose as if in his native clime, nor to dose away a

The conflict is against an abnormal state of things.

Lamennais cited.

few days in indolent slumber. Time is not a gentle breeze which caresses and fans his brow in passing, but a wind that alternately burns and freezes him, a tempest that drives his frail bark rapidly on, under a beclouded sky, and across dangerous shoals. He needs to watch, and row, and sweat; he needs to do violence to his nature, and to bend his will to that immutable order that harasses and hems it in, incessantly. Duty, stern duty, presides at his cradle, rises with him when he leaves it, and accompanies him to the tomb." These words of Lamennais are a vivid and striking picture of our actual condition.

It is not necessary to have accepted all the details of our solution of the problem of evil in order to sympathize with the considerations which I shall offer in this lecture; it is enough that you admit that evil ought not to be, and that, consequently, its general prevalence in no wise diminishes the obligation to destroy it. To do away with evil is the purpose of the good combat of life.

He who combats is a soldier; and every soldier should know his colors and receive the word of order. Our colors, the banner which we are to plant on the citadels of the enemy, is the Good. The word of order is Victory. The supreme commander is He whose eternal volition is identical with, and the substance of, the good.

Let us inquire what should be, in our contest

against evil, the point of our departure, what the scope of our aim, what the shoals we should avoid, and, finally, what is the true plan of the combat. Our topics will, therefore, be: Point of Departure, Scope of our Efforts, Shoals, and Plan of the Conflict.

Chief heads of the sixth lecture.

I. Point of Departure.

What is to be our point of departure? how are we to set out in our contest against evil? What, if I may so speak, is the condition of enrollment into the army of the good? Have you not sometimes started from your home with the intention of repairing to some definite point, and, after walking some time, suddenly come to the consciousness that, because of some mental preoccupation, you had taken the wrong road? At the moment of making this discovery you see at once that, in order to accomplish your purpose, you must turn about, and perform what is called in military style, *a movement of conversion.* The starting-point in the contest against evil is a movement of this nature. As we are naturally in a state of egotism, our volitions are naturally directed toward ourselves, as if it were practicable for us to be our own goal, and our own center. This way is evil and deceptive, for egotism is not the way of happiness. We have, therefore, to turn about by an act of conversion.

In detailed histories of the retreat which followed the disastrous battle of Leipsic, you will read of the formation, on the outskirts of the disbanding French army, of a terrible swarm of *fricoteurs*. Thus were called those soldiers who, abandoning their colors and the orders of their officers, had dispersed themselves, some to indulge in pillage and evil passions, others from simple indolence or cowardice, and who, leaving the melting army to save itself as best it could, had taken for their device, "Each for himself." Now what had this class of men to do in order to return to order? Simply to rejoin their colors, and place themselves under legitimate command; to abandon the evil device, "Each for himself," and assume this device, which alone can save an army in a hostile country: "Each for all, and all for each."

Our natural condition illustrated by that of disbanded soldiers.

Now, we also, instead of being united for the struggle against evil, are all of us by nature disbanded; we seek each his particular interest; we must rejoin our colors, and put ourselves under the authority of the Chief. And what desires this Chief, the sovereign Father over all? He desires not the exclusive good of this one or that one, of any select number of his children; he desires the good of all, and it is this that we also should likewise desire. We should aim at the good of all, and in this each finds his own share; for he who forgets him-

Method of starting in our life-work.

self is he who most truly cares for himself. Our starting-point in the good struggle is, therefore, to renounce egotism, which leaves us a prey to the strokes of evil, or which is rather itself the essence of evil, and to turn ourselves back toward the supreme law of charity. But this point of departure is the commencing point of a development in soul-life which deserves our special attention.

Human life begins under the impulses of the heart, apart from the action of conscience. At first, man follows his instincts, then, he undergoes the influence of those about him. The child is under the influence of the family; the adult, under that of society. One may live thus without having in himself any principle of action, yielding only to external impressions, without true exercise of will or of conscience. Such a man, should he happen to be among the Puritans of England or America, would be of grave demeanor, serious words, and strictly exact conduct. But transport him into a frivolous society, and the same man will act quite otherwise. Those who live thus, simply following a current without reacting against it, are not yet born to the moral life; and from this point of view one can say that there are multitudes of men already old who are not yet born. In the majority of cases, however, the conscience makes itself heard in the primitive life of the heart; and conscience presents itself under two forms. It

Two phases of conscience.

forbids: Thou shalt not; and it commands: Thou shalt.

The first manifestations of conscience are uniformly of the first form: Thou shalt not lie; thou shalt not steal. If a man has elevated instincts, and a well-balanced temperament, and if he has grown up in honest society, it may be that he will live without seriously violating any of the restrictive precepts of conscience. He may hence imagine that he is a good man, or that, as he will express it, he does wrong to no one. Nevertheless, in this observance of the prohibitory rules of morality such a man may remain supremely selfish, may be his own proper center. If he is content with avoiding what society regards as evil, and if he does not positively work for the good, it is vain for him to say that he does wrong to no one; in reality he does wrong to every body, since he does not employ for the common good a power of which his fellows have need. His honest life is only an honest egotism. Moreover, such a position cannot strictly be maintained. If the power which is given to us for the common good is not employed in its legitimate direction, it becomes corrupt. One does not triumph over evil by simply refusing to do it, and by continuing to live for self. In strictness of fact, we overcome evil only by good. The good is not simply a rule of prohibition; it is a positive command, assigning a direction for our powers, a goal

for our volitions. This is the second form of the conscience: Thou shalt.

But what shalt thou do? Good. What good? All good, without exception; it is the very nature of the good to be obligatory, and obligatory in its totality. Now what is the good? The good, in the full sense of the word, is the plan of the Creator for the happiness of his spiritual creatures. To accomplish the good is, therefore, to put harmony into the universe, and work the happiness of the world. Such is the purpose proposed to our efforts.

The goal of life.

Let us pause here to contemplate the bright light which this thought casts over life. Let us take, for example, the duty of labor. Labor is a law of nature which presents itself, in the first place, under the form of necessity. To the one it says: Labor, to avoid indigence, that scourge of the poor. To another: Labor, to avoid *ennui*, that scourge of the rich. To the one it says: If thou toil not, thou wilt lack bread to feed the body, and thy children will starve. To the other: If thou toil not, thou wilt lack happiness, which is the food of the soul, and at thy fireside, however well it may be warmed, the heart of thy children will be cold. Thus, labor appears in the first place as a necessity, as a law whose violation entails harsh retributions.

Let us notice, now, how this law is transfigured by

the consideration of the idea of the good, that is, of the consecration of all volitions to the general happiness. Labor is a universal and fundamental law of the spiritual world; since for spirits, whose very essence is free power, to live is to act. Now, the co-operation of all the forces, each acting in its legitimate place and direction, would produce a harmony whose fruit would be progress, or the increasing amelioration of society. When this thought once enters the understanding, then even the gardener, while reposing on his spade, the artisan, while suspending for a moment his work, in fact, all honest laborers, may say without presumption that they are no less necessary agents in the general march of society than the men whose positions are surrounded by the greatest pomp. The law of labor, then, is transfigured. Under the form, *Thou shalt*, it was a harsh necessity; under the form, *Thou shouldst*, it becomes a privilege, sublime in proportion as we penetrate its significance, and attractive as we come to see that its foundation is goodness. Yes, yes, all of us—the one in guiding his plow in the furrow, the other in handling the saw or plane, the other in holding the square or file, the other in settling disputes and rendering justice, the other in administering public affairs, the other in instruction and study—all of us, are contributing to shape the destinies of the world; and we will all do our task

The humblest life transfigured by conscientiousness.

joyfully, as soon as we come fully to understand how high a privilege it is, to fulfill the common law of labor in fraternity of love.

Such is the good. The goal of each will should not be the individual who wills, but the development and harmony of the common brotherhood. When this is once truly understood, the idea of self-seeking gives place to the idea of charity. This is a moral discovery, analogous to that of the astronomer Copernicus. The earth had been saying: I am the center of the universe; the starry heavens revolve around me, and exist for me only. But science came, and said: Thou art not the center of the universe; it is thou that revolvest around the sun, and the sun itself, with all its retinue of planets, revolves perhaps also about some central sun in the immense system of creation. But is the earth humiliated by this? By no means; it is simply assigned to its place; and every place is good so long as the proper circle is traced, so long as the true orbit is not abandoned.

The three-fold conversion.

To substitute the idea of charity for the idea of self-seeking—such is the conversion of the intelligence; to be seriously and thoroughly resolved to do duty—such is the conversion of the will; to love the duty which we have determined to do—such is the conversion of the heart.

Such is our starting-point. What, now, should by the scope of our efforts for the good?

II. Scope of our Efforts.

Where do we find evil? Every-where. Where should we do good? Every-where. In the presence of all good whatever, we should repeat the cry of the ancient Crusaders: God wills it! Let us beware of that narrow and empty religion which would admit a distinction between the cause of God and the cause of charity. To this perverted religion, which would assign to God only a small share in public worship and in external forms, true religion—that which should be the center of our existence, the inspiration of the whole life—will always respond, in the language of St. James, that, "Faith without works is dead."

Let us not permit the good to be limited in any such manner. There is no sphere of human activity into which it should not enter; there are no walls of tradition or prejudice which it should not break through. The contrary opinion is an error not less frequent than deplorable. Notice, for example, its workings in politics. Injustice is quite revolting in the relations of private life: none should be deprived of what belongs to him; nothing is more branded than theft. And yet have we not seen it raised into a maxim of international law that, in the sphere of politics, "Might makes right?" "Those are but freaks of princes,"

As evil is every-where, so should it be combated every-where.

as says Andrieux; "they respect a trifle, but steal a province."*

But how many private citizens indulge in similar freaks! It is not less obligatory to respect our neighbor's reputation than his material possessions. Now, In politics. for the sake of illustration, what are the usual concomitants of a democratic election? In the case of a candidate of the opposite party, see how ready we are to credit every scandalous rumor with regard to his life and motives! how ready we are, even, to spread them abroad, without the least certain evidence of their truth! And why all this? Because it is mere politics; and morality, as we practically say, should stay within its own sphere.

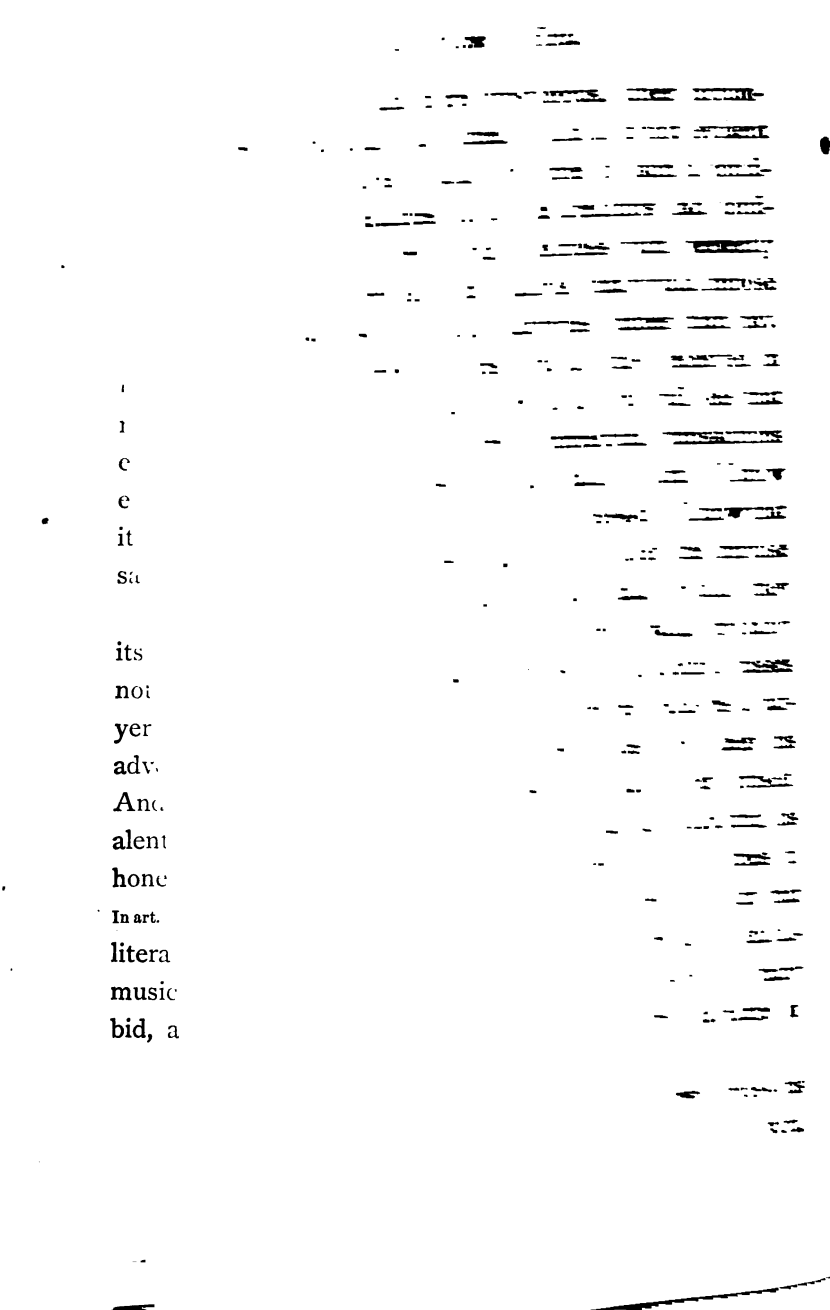
Almost every profession seeks thus to establish for itself a closed field into which common morality is not to enter. It is wrong to lie; but what of a lawyer? Would it not be too great a restriction on an advocate to require him always to tell the truth? And what of commerce? Is it not a usage too prevalent in this business, to take for granted that exact honesty and truthfulness are not to be expected? In art. And so is it also in the sphere of art and literature. Here are paintings decidedly lascivious, music that is enervating, poetry whose charm is morbid, and prose which will leave unfortunate associa-

* Ce sont là jeux de prince :
On respecte un moulin, on vole une province.

tions in the memory. But what of that! exclaim the artists; provided only that the laws of beauty are not violated, there is nothing to complain of; let us have art for its own sake, and leave morality in its own domain!

It is thus that men attempt every-where to establish shadowy regions, to hollow out caverns from which the entrance of sunlight is interdicted. And, in fact, the light does retire; but with what sad consequences! In politics men deviate from morality a little at first, and then more and more, until finally they come to the maxims of Machiavelli, maxims which are practiced by many men who are not princes. Politics, the proper business of which is to promote the well-being of nations, becomes then one of the greatest scourges of mankind. And in commerce the effect of an ever-increasing departure from the laws of morality is, finally, to affect trade in its very sources, namely, confidence and credit. In those great crises which afflict society, and dry up the sources of labor, a share of the embarrassment is doubtless to be attributed to political events, to the choking of markets, as well as to causes which do not belong so evidently to the moral sphere. It is clear, however, that if business men had perfect confidence that their agents and correspondents would not take advantage of circumstances to violate, to their disadvantage, the laws of strict probity,

Happy effects of a wider application of the moral law.



any thing that man engages in, can isolate itself from morality without bringing upon itself ruin. Let us break down these unjustifiable walls. Let us throw open all caverns; let the light of the good reign everywhere, not under the form of a narrow and cramping rule, but as a powerful inspiration, shedding everywhere the light and warmth of spiritual truth.

But where does duty cease? Where the activity of man ceases, and nowhere else. There exists in human life no phase which should be unaffected by the good. When may we cease to combat evil? When it shall be destroyed, and not sooner. All good is obligatory; all good ought to be; such is its very nature. Either conscience deceives us, or we are obligated to put order into the universe, and work the happiness of the world. Such is the object that is set before us, and toward which our efforts are to aim. But here is a danger.

III. Shoals.

Our programme has become alarming; and, if we consider it in its entire scope, it is absurd. In fact, it really seems as if it would make of us but so many Don Quixotes on the highways of life, charged to redress all wrongs, to repair all injuries, and to restore order everywhere; and you know well enough how the brave chevalier of La Mancha succeeded in putting order into the world. Don Quixote was a fool.

But he was a good fool; it is difficult not to love him; but after all he was a fool; and our programme seems equally affected with folly. What, in fact, would become of a ship which should set out from port with the purpose of seeing every thing, without having any prescribed plans? From the very fact that it is destined to see every thing, it would have no reason for going here rather than there. Opening, therefore, its sails to the first wind that blew, and using neither helm nor compass, what would become of it? The shoal that would wreck it would of course not be far off. And such would also be our moral destiny should we launch forth vaguely in the pursuit of all good; we would be seized by the current of dispersion and sadly make shipwreck on the shoals of discouragement.

The danger of dissipating our forces.

For, in fact, how boundless the work! To convert one's self and to convert the world; to fulfill our duties in the family, and in the exercise of our profession; to lead the blind, to succor the poor, to visit the sick; to do our civic duties as elector, soldier, juryman; to busy ourselves in reforming institutions; to ameliorate that which already is, to create what ought to be; to give ear, in fine, to the varied and never-ending appeals for works of charity! Of these appeals, you know there is in fact scarcely any limit. Here, for example, at the beginning of cold weather, a society presents itself propos-

Calls for charitable works.

ing to furnish food to the poor at the lowest possible rates; the thing is excellent, hesitate not to co-operate with it. And here is another society, working to spread popular instruction; you will do well to take part in it, for instruction is the food of the soul. And here is a club for circulating good books; what, in fact, is more laudable than to counteract, as much as possible, the circulation of bad books? And here is an institution aiming to repress the nuisance of beggary; and who is not interested in it? who does not see that it is an excellent work to check unworthy beggars, and to provide for the really helpless? And here is an enterprise to furnish cheap, healthy lodgings for the poor; surely it is praiseworthy to furnish, as fully as possible, air and light and health to all; we cannot refuse ourselves to such a good work. Elsewhere there is an effort to obtain by persuasion and free consent, the suspension of labor on Sunday. Let us hasten to second this effort; for, as much as industry is desirable and profitable, equally so is, likewise, that leisure for worship which is necessary to raise mind and heart to the true dignity of manhood.

To all these enterprises we are required to devote our time, our counsels, our money. We must give an hour where we cannot give a day; a dollar where we cannot give ten. Nor must we allow these works at home to make us forgetful of those abroad. A fire consumes a village in Switzerland or on the French

border; we must subscribe. In this or that manufacturing city there are workmen without bread; we must help to save them from starving. The negroes of America have great difficulty in passing the crisis of their emancipation; we must interest ourselves in the negroes of America. Nor must we forget the heathen to whom we should bear the benedictions of our faith and civilization. What work! what work!

And yet there are sluggards.

And yet there are some men who languish and complain, because, as they say, they have nothing to do! There are men who seem to see in the improvements of modern civilization only so many multiplied means and occasions for killing time—for killing time, which is the coin by which we should purchase the good of our fellows. In the presence of the boundless proportions and ramifications of evil in the world, this misuse of time is as bad as casting grain into a river in the midst of a famishing city; it is the throwing away of all the brighter elements of life.

But let us return to our subject. We cannot too earnestly remind those who fold their arms and waste their lives, how many good works demand their help, how many harvests are waiting for reapers; but it is a different phase of the subject that now calls our attention.

Our perplexity now is that there is too much to do.

The field for practical charity is immense; and practical works are not half our task. We have need not only of boundless knowledge, but also of boundless wisdom. We need to enlighten the conscience, that our motives may be directed toward a really good object, and that we may avoid the errors of misguided zeal. We need to enlighten our practical understanding; for it is not enough that the intention be pure and the goal good in itself; we need wisdom to select appropriate means to ends. The economist Bastiat mentions certain philanthropic and social enterprises, which, while springing from a pure intention and aiming at an excellent object, yet produce, in fact, much evil, because they proceed on a misconception of the true plan of social harmony, which is the expression of the will of the Creator, and tend to substitute in its place an unnatural order of things whose consequences would be disastrous. A like danger is incurred in every sphere of human activity; zeal without knowledge works evil; to act effectually, we need to know the object to be attained, the means to employ, and the obstacles to overcome. The work of conscience, therefore, needs the aid of the reason; we must unite all the light of the understanding to all the ardors of the will, so as to keep upright our own heart, to combat incessantly within and without, to do all and to learn all, to have an opinion on all subjects, to exert an influence in every sphere; but

at this rate, what will become of us? We are already drifting away on the current of dispersion. We will do every thing but by halves; we will abandon one good work for the next one that comes offering itself. In the conflict against evil we shall act like a soldier, who, raising his sword against one enemy, should turn it away without striking him in order to assault another, and from the second in order to pursue a third, and so on, without ever doing effectual service. Thus we would be engaged in a fruitless agitation for the good, which really, however, would only further the evil; for a vague and undisciplined zeal becomes indiscreet, and introduces trouble every-where, and order nowhere. It is, as Fénélon has said, "an anxious and unquiet ardor, more apt to create perplexity than to enlighten us as to our duties."

Our perplexity.

And it is noteworthy that the natural tendency of civilization is to increase all these dangers. In proportion as our relations are multiplied, and as a general solidarity of cares, interests, and works, is established, in this same proportion we tend to lose that calmness so necessary to the sound culture of the heart, in that, more and more, we are interested in every thing and tempted to participate in every thing. Every day a new call for help comes from one end of the world or the other. If we yield to this current we will be involved in an ardent and unquiet agitation, and will not be long in

And the progress of civilization increases rather than diminishes it.

exhausting our powers, our time, and resources; nature will interpose her veto, and, overcome as well by exhaustion of body as by weariness of soul, we will stagger and disastrously fall. We are glad to say, to the honor of human nature, that over against the millions of victims of sense, vanity, and ambition, there are, in fact, some victims of an ardent and disordered zeal for the good.

The prostration springing from this fatal dispersion of forces appears under two forms. With some, it is a noble sadness springing from a sentiment of powerlessness, but without destroying a firm and persistent confidence in the good. With others, however, it is a sort of half persuasion that the good which they had sought with such feverish ardor was, after all, only a delusion; they conclude with Philinte, in Molière, that it is the greatest of follies to undertake to put to rights the world.* They adopt as device the favorite saying of an Italian statesman at the beginning of this century: The world goes of itself,† and hence there is no need of meddling with it. Here we meet in fact with a stumbling-block, with danger of discouragement. But what is to be done? It is impossible to renounce the fundamental truth that all good is obligatory; for

Two forms of consequent discouragement.

* "Que c'est une folie à nulle autre seconde,
De vouloir se mêler de corriger le monde."

† "*Il mondo va da se.*"

this would be to deny the very essence of the good. There must, therefore, be some other truth to complement this one, and by the aid of which we may form a *rational* scheme for the conflict of life. This truth, doubtless, some of you have anticipated. Let us try to place it in a clear light.

IV. Plan of the Conflict.

The obligation to do the good is absolute and universal; but this universal obligation is distributed by the Maker of all among all his creatures. We are all called to contribute to the general good; but no one of us is personally and exclusively charged with restoring order to the universe, and giving happiness to the world. This is the fundamental truth which we have left out of consideration in the preceding observations. It will help us out of our perplexity.

A truth complementary to the obligation to do all good.

Every creature has a definite, providentially-assigned place. Eliminate from the circumstances of each of us all that may appear as disorder, all the evils that proceed from our personal will, from the actions of others, or from the influence of bad institutions, and it will still be true that, while normally there is equality of duty and equality of happiness, there will yet always remain diversity of position. Absolute equality cannot exist even in the material universe. Conceive a world composed

Each has his providential place.

of perfectly similar atoms: will you have realized absolute equality? By no means; these atoms will differ in the positions they occupy, as they will necessarily be at unequal and different distances from the common center. The same diversity must exist among spirits; this diversity is the condition of the existence of the world. Each occupies a place which falls to him independently of his will. Our first duty is to accept this place as an expression of general Providence. Not to accept this place, but to cast a covetous look upon the position of others, is to commit the sin of envy. And envy, when indulged in freely, finds no stopping-place in the vast universe; it comes finally to wish to usurp the place of God. It is the primitive temptation which explains the origin of evil. Envy, which brings so much trouble into society, and so much bitterness into souls, is the most immediate outgrowth of the primitive fall.

But do not fear lest this thought should have a reactionary tendency. Fear not lest acquiescence in our providentially-assigned sphere should lead us to sit like Turks, with arms and legs folded, and await the decrees of fate. As we have already seen, the law of every moral creature is continually to ameliorate its condition, and thus realize true progress. Every place in the world of spirits has its special duties, its peculiar works. If a being, called to develop himself as a free power, should remain stationary,

this would not be to stay in his proper place, it would be to desert his post.

We have here, therefore, the light which we needed in order to lay out a practical plan for the combat of life. From the diversity of positions there results a graduated scale, a hierarchy, of duties. No one person is the center of the world, and no one should be the goal of his own volitions; but each one is a center of personal activity. Conceive of each will as a point from which power radiates; conceive this point as surrounded by a series of concentric circles; and conceive that the power in developing itself is not to pass to any one of these circles until after having filled those which are nearer the point of departure: and this will be an apt image of the normal exercise of our activity in the practice of the good.

The scale of duties.

We must begin with ourselves. We are all keepers, the ones of the others; nevertheless, in the order of Providence, each is more especially charged with keeping himself. We can give an excellent interpretation to the common proverb: "Charity begins at home." To labor for the good, the first requisite is to be good. The question is, here, not of an order of succession in time, but in causation. If one should wish to be good before doing good, he would be like a boy unwilling to go into the water before having first learned to swim; for to be

Our first moral concern is for self.

good and to do good in the true sense of the word, are one and the same thing. The question is not of an order of succession, but of an order of importance. In the accomplishment of duty, our first care should always be directed to ourselves. We should not be of those who preach the law to others without sincerely trying to keep it ourselves, or bind burdens for the shoulders of others without bearing them ourselves. The first duty of each is to restore himself to order; to govern his actions, feelings, and thoughts in conformity with the moral law.

This duty includes this other one, namely, of preserving ourselves in a condition to accomplish our part. There are exceptional cases in which man should be willing, without hesitation, to sacrifice his health, or even his life; but in ordinary cases it is our duty to economize our forces in order to be capable for our work. Repose is necessary. Amusements, even, and pleasure have their place in a well-regulated life; for man needs recreation. The spirit which should regulate this order of things, is suggested by the very word itself. *Recreation* should *recreate,* that is, renew our forces; its object determines its legitimate limits. It is very evident that we violate the law of recreation when the diversion which should renew our forces, consumes them. If we waste body and soul in excessive eating or drinking—if it is necessary to spend the

We should economize our forces.

day in recovering from the fatigues of a night spent at a ball, or theater, or club—it is very evident that the order of nature is disturbed.

We should seek moments of solitude.

But what is even more important than recreation, for the health of the moral life, is the habit of finding moments for mental repose, for silence, for meditation. In a world where disorder reigns so largely, the law of charity becomes a law of combat. But in order to combat, one needs to be strong; and no one can build up his spiritual forces if he does not manage to be often in solitude, to isolate himself from the tumult of life, in order to nurture his mind on those high thoughts which secure against dissipation. We never act more effectually in the service of others than when we frequently withdraw from them, in order calmly to contemplate, in the presence of the universal Father, the great laws of spiritual order which bind us to all of our fellows, and to him, the common center of all.

We must respect the liberty of others.

After having been busied with ourselves, we must then pass to others. In this passage from self to others, there is one feature which deserves careful consideration. To do good to others is the law of our will; but these others are our fellows, that is, they have wills also, and we are not their masters. There is one common Master of souls, but it is not we. Therefore, after having exerted our legitimate influence on others—an influence

that will be great in proportion as we love them,—we should stop, and respect their liberty; for indiscretion is here fatal. An indiscreet zeal for good awakens man's instincts of independence, and thus turns to evil. Under the general law of solidarity which makes us to so large an extent one, each has yet his proper responsibility and his personal affairs.

A good rule for the influence which we ought to exert on others, is suggested by the above-mentioned concentric circles. Our first care should be for our own family, and for our closest natural companions in the journey of life. This rule is essential, but it is frequently violated. Here is, for example, a very charitable lady. She visits the poor very often, which is an excellent thing; she is a member of all the benevolent societies, which is perhaps too much. For, in fact, my good lady, on the supposition that your husband, returning fatigued from the toil and cares of the day, has great need of finding a glowing fireside, a repast ready, and a cheering welcome, and that, instead of this, he learns, on reaching his home, that Madam is gone to attend her charity-meeting, will you not then be neglecting your first duty, to attend to a work which, while excellent in itself, yet becomes evil by taking a place which does not belong to it? And you, sir, also, if you are needed at home for counsel, for making a decision, for a necessary virile intervention, will you do

The precedence of home duties.

right to remain from home, even though it be to attend a meeting of public utility? If the wife is at her charity-meeting, and the husband at his club, what is to become of the family? the children? Is not that fire of wood, or coal, that is smoldering when it ought to be brightly blazing, the symbol of another fire whose flame also is lacking? Are you not depriving your children of those memories of the parental fireside which ought to constitute a protection and strength in your sons and daughters against the seductions of life?

And professional duties. And our professional duties fall in the same class with those of the family. A clerk has no right to engage in philanthropic works if he thereby must slight his duties to his employers. A banker has no right to engage in the best of charities if he thereby jeopardizes the interests of his creditors. And we who fill the functions of citizens in a free State, we have no right to help our neighbors in the best of enterprises, if thereby we must neglect our duties as electors.

We have no right to sacrifice a near duty to one that is farther off, however good and great it may be. Such is the general rule; by it we can avoid the shoal of dissipated forces. This, we say, is the ordinary rule for ordinary lives. There are, however, special vocations which have special privileges; there are persons who are called by their very pro-

Exceptional cases.

fession, to break, if need be, the bonds of family and country, in view of a general interest which they have accepted as their first duty. There are also cases of urgency, when a duty which is usually remote becomes an immediate duty for every body. When, for example, a conflagration threatens a city with destruction, then our professional and domestic duties yield to the general duty of preserving the city. But these are exceptional cases; as a general rule, we can labor efficiently in the cause of the good, only by observing the place providentially assigned to us in society.

This truth is important, but it must not be misapplied. There is nothing more elastic than the forces and opportunities of man: egotism restrains them, charity augments them. However exactly you may fill your immediate duties, if you are yet inclined to disparage those who do more than you, if you are always ready to throw your little vial of cold water on every generous impulse, you will clearly prove that the practice of your own duties is, at bottom, only an intensified egotism. Let the immoderate pursuits of ambition and vanity, the unworthy thirst for earthly pleasure, and the temptations to idleness, be suppressed, and there is nobody who will not find some time to do good works outside of the circle of his more immediate duties. But in this respect there is a great inequality. Many persons are able, outside

of their labor, and their indispensably necessary repose, to accomplish only acts of individual beneficence, to lend a hand to a neighbor, to aid a traveler, or to address a kind word to an afflicted one. And here presents itself a privilege of the wealthy classes, which at first sight seems immense, the privilege of being able largely to take part in works of public charity. Take the instance of a merchant who should at first have concentrated his efforts upon his business in order to establish his family, while yet also doing such charity as he could without deviating from his purpose. Suppose that this man, on arriving, by toil, at an affluence limited within reasonable bounds, should retire from business, and then consecrate his whole activity in aiding, succoring, and consoling others, and in taking part in enterprises of general utility: and you have before you one of the noblest types of humanity—a type which, thank God, is not rare in Switzerland. Also in this liberty of action for the good, which results from affluence, there is need to guard against dispersion: all forces are increased by concentration. Almost certainly, ten men will obtain a better result by giving themselves each to a particular work, than if these ten men should each take part in ten different works. The Emperor Marcus Aurelius gave good practical advice when he said, "Do not meddle with too many affairs."

All can find time for some forms of charity.

It seems, at first glance, that this liberty of devoting one's self to the public good is an immense privilege for a generous heart. This privilege is real, but it is not as great as it appears; for all and each of us contribute to the public good by fulfilling faithfully our special individual duties. In fact, the very first of public interests is that individual duties should be properly fulfilled. There exists in the rural districts a proverb that might be applied also in cities: "Let each mind his own business, and the cows will be well cared for." The most majestic oak, in its multiform and vigorous growth, is but the result of an infinity of particular movements of little currents of sap in very little channels. From the moment that individual duties should be well performed, there would be far less to do in what we call public charities, a large share of public beneficence having no other object than to remedy the results of neglected individual duty. Do away, for example, with indolence and drunkenness, as well as inconsiderate almsgiving, and, although there may yet remain poor persons, there will, however, be nothing more to do in repressing the abuses of mendicity. Establish temperance and purity of morals, and three fourths of the hospitals are at once emptied; and thus one of the branches of charitable activity is greatly reduced. If governments and nations would obey the laws of justice and reason, it would not be

The privileges of all are essentially equal.

necessary to found associations for solacing the miseries of the battle-field. And many similar illustrations might be given.

Such is the plan which we propose for the combat of life. We owe ourselves, our whole powers, to all forms of good, but only in the order of the position assigned to each of us by Providence. Thus our efforts, being guided by law, will be lasting, because they are guided, and they will be fruitful because they are lasting. Harmonious effort will realize the order of the spiritual world. In the presence of the armies of evil, we are by nature in a disbanded state; and this is our weakness. It is egotism, that is, it is the maxim, "Each for himself," that disperses us. The order of battle for the good is, for each to turn himself about, and march resolutely against the enemy, following closely his colors, and each preserving his own place in the ranks. It is beautiful, this marching under the banner of the good, and beholding the humblest duties irradiated with divine light. It is beautiful to take part in the great contest, and confidently to look forward, at the close of the struggle, to repose and harmony, and to the regular and increasing expansion of the inner life. It is beautiful to contemplate yon side of the anguishes, disorders, and torments of a world disturbed by suffering and sin—"a heaven of free, loving, and reasonable stars, an immutable sky filled full

The practical working of the plan.

of serenity, light, and love, where all that we have hoped for shall be real."*

Such is the work which is to be begun on earth, and to be prosecuted in the endless future. Is there any one who finds life heavy, existence dull and wearying, and the succession of days monotonous? Let him but comprehend these things, and he will feel that life is worth living. And if there be any one who doubts the good and its definite triumph, for the reason that he lacks a fixed faith in God, I would say to him, in the words of Socrates: "The thing is worth the trouble of venturing to believe in it; it is a hazard worthy of running; it is a hope with which we should, as it were, enchant ourselves."† The worth of life.

Plato, the great disciple of Socrates, has depicted, in pages which will be read as long as human letters endure,‡ the progress of the soul while rising from beauty to beauty, up to the contemplation of that supreme beauty which is infinite. And who of us has not, at times, cast a longing desire toward the Supreme ideal? What libertine does not feel that it is noble and beautiful to triumph over sense? What untruthful man does not feel in his conscience the worth of truthfulness? What faint-hearted one does not, from the depths of his heart, admire courage? What egotist has not had to stifle The aspiration toward the ideal.

* Père Gratry. † *Phaedo.* ‡ In the *Banquet.*

the voice of his own nature, and learn to despise himself, before he could turn generous-heartedness into derision? Now, the good is the truth; for it is the expression of the Supreme Mind who has determined all that is, and all that ought to be; the good is beauty, as our own hearts amply evince, in the simple fact of their tending to it by all the purer aspirations which inspire them. The good stands out before our soul as a splendid vision, the attraction of which it is impossible not to feel. We go forth to meet it, but come into conflict with evil; we then too often fall back into our own darkness; the cloud re-forms before us, and we ask ourselves whether the glorious vision was not after all a deceptive illusion. No, no! the vision is true; the good is the highest reality for it is an outgoing of the Sovereign God. We behold it clearly; what hinders us from grasping it? Lack of strength. Is there a remedy? We will try to suggest one in our closing lecture.

The great lack.

LECTURE VII.

THE SOURCE OF STRENGTH.

WHAT we lack in the presence of the good, is the strength, the ability, to accomplish it. Except in cases where we are blinded by an overpowering passion, we feel and know well enough that the practice of evil renders us unhappy; but we have not the courage to break off from this practice. Where can we find the strength which we lack?

In order to answer this question, let us seek for a symbol in the power which we have of acting upon our body, that is to say, in physical force. And, in fact, we will find here more than a symbol. The connection of our two natures is so intimate, so profound, and so continued, that in our whole life they are never separated. Our spiritual life manifests itself only under condition of the existence of the organs, and by their instrumentality. Nothing but a false idealism, the result of an erring philosophy, could ignore the moral value of disciplining the body. On the other hand, we cannot deny the influence of morality on the organic functions; hygiene, as has been said, is more a virtue than a science. He who has a will firm enough to govern

An analogy in physical force.

his body according to the true laws of nature, will obtain a better sanitary result than he who, though directed by the most skillful of physicians, yet yields to disorderly proclivities. Physical force, therefore, and moral force, are very closely related; and if we take into consideration the influence of the will on the organs of thought, we will never find an absolute separation between our corporeal and our physical natures. But without following further this analogy, let us simply seek in bodily force a symbol of moral force.

How is that power which we exert in muscular movements kept up and increased? By exercising it; it is for this reason that manual labor, promenading and gymnastics, contribute to good health. But exercise keeps up strength only in expending it, and would soon exhaust it, were it not nourished by food. We partake of nourishment, sometimes solid, sometimes liquid; and the solid portions thereof have to be liquefied before serving for alimentation. Nutrition takes place through a marvelous system of digestive and circulatory functions; and in the midst of these functions there is one primitive phenomenon which is the basis of all the rest. This phenomenon is respiration. The necessary condition of the alimentation of the body is our contact with the vitalizing principle of the atmosphere. At the moment when the new-born infant is to begin its independent physical life, the first requisite of all is that the air

shall enter its lungs; it must respire; it is only after having respired that it can take nourishment. Such are the facts in which we shall presently discover a symbol of the alimentation of the powers of the soul. The order of our thoughts in this lecture will be: Food of the soul, Prayer, and the Question of Faith.

General heads of the seventh lecture.

I. Food of the Soul.

Spiritual strength is increased, normally, by its own regular exercise. Many persons find themselves feeble on important occasions simply because they have disdained small efforts and minor virtues. But this strength, which is kept and increased by its own exercise, has also need of nourishment; and spiritual nourishment consists of ideas and sentiments. Ideas are, in some sort, the solid parts of the food of the soul, and sentiments the liquid parts. Now, just as the solids do not nourish the body save as they are liquefied, so also ideas do not act upon the will until after they are translated into sentiments. Ideas may remain in the intelligence without any practical results; but from sentiments we receive an active impulse; they influence the will.

What are the ideas which develop the power of the soul for the accomplishment of good? They are, mainly, those which are involved in the contemplation and meditation of the moral law.

The source of helpful ideas.

Consider the different classes of our duties, their concatenation, almost as marvelous as that of natural phenomenon, their relations among each other, and their general dependence on the law of charity, from which they all spring, as light-rays proceed from the sun. Consider, above all, as a protection against the illusions of life, the inseparable connection of duty and happiness. Learn from the works of the sages—for example, from the thoughts of Socrates, and from some of the admirable pages of Cicero—that all search for happiness outside of the laws of moral order is delusory; that in the ordinary course of things, labor procures comfort, veracity gains esteem; and that in certain cases when it is necessary to renounce all these goods, there is in this very sacrifice to duty, in the approbation of conscience, a joy superior to all other joys: learn this and you will have attained to thoughts which will give you real strength for the struggles of life.

Of helpful sentiments.

As to the sentiments which may aid us in the combat against evil, they are first and mainly the attraction itself which the good inspires, an attraction resulting from the thoughts which we have just indicated. The contemplation of the moral law, when engaged in in calmness and in the silence of the evil passions, which are ever ready to rebel against order, tends naturally to awaken a love of the good, which is a real power, as it inclines the heart

in the direction of conscience. The good has, in fact, an altogether peculiar beauty, which, as soon as we have learned to perceive it, transcends all others. This we can illustrate by a comparison. On leaving a church or a lecture-room, raise your eyes, if the night is serene, and contemplate for a moment the firmament. You will perceive at once that the sky, with its brilliant setting of stars, has a beauty that is calm and profound, and of an entirely different nature from the beauty of the fairest edifice lighted by the flames of tapers and chandeliers. Now, the contemplation of the moral law produces a sentiment analogous to that inspired by the firmament. It awakens the sentiment of a beauty far above all those which are met with in the spheres of passion and interest. This accounts for why these words of Kant have been so often cited and admired: "There are two objects which fill the soul with an admiration and reverence which are ever fresh, and which increase in proportion as the mind more frequently returns to and meditates upon them: *the starry heavens above us, and the moral law within us.*"

The contemplation of the good awakens, therefore, an admiration which attracts us toward it. If we more frequently meditated on the wonders of the law, we would be less feeble against evil. This resource is real, but it is of an abstract character. We have a means more usual and more efficacious for inclining

our heart on the side of conscience. This means consists in the employment of personal affections. Nothing more fortifies the heart in struggling against temptations than the influence of personal affections which coincide with the love of the good; and this influence is very often felt. Suppose, for example, a young man, raised by respectable parents, (let us observe, in passing, that in obedience to a profound instinct of nature many parents who, in fact, are far from respectable, strive nevertheless to show themselves so in the eyes of their children;) suppose this young man remote from the parental fireside and in prey to a terrible temptation. His conscience is at stake, perhaps also his honor; and he is on the point of falling. At this moment, the thought of his home comes into his mind. He has the power to turn aside from this salutary image, and yield himself to the imaginations of a heart fascinated by evil. But if he profits by the beneficent light which has appeared to his vision—if he clings persistently to the thought of his father, and of that mother whose heart he is about to break—is it not clear that he shall thus by an act of the will give himself a powerful impulse toward the good? Personal affections are hence a great help in the combat of life. And for this reason it is very important, so far as it depends on our choice, to select with care those who are to have a part in our affections, so that these affections may

Of helpful affections.

be a help and not an obstacle in the work of the moral culture of the heart. And for this reason also it is important to preserve and cultivate, more even than we cultivate the flowers over their graves, the memories of those who, after having walked before us in the good way, have departed from this life; so that their association with our thoughts may be for us a salutary power, and that, though dead to this world, they may yet speak to us, and come to our help in the moral crises of life. And, finally, this is why the moral life cannot attain the plenitude of its development until after the heart has opened itself to the sentiment of divine love, and thus fixed its affections on the sole Being who is always and in every thing identical with the good. The love of creatures, even the best, is always liable, in one respect or another, to find itself in conflict with the law. The sole love which is in an unfailing harmony with the conscience, is the love of, and for, that One who is the principal of the conscience and the author of the law.

Ideas, sentiments: such are the aliments of the soul. This spiritual food is offered to us, not only in the relations which we sustain to our contemporaries, but also in the traditions which associate us with the past of humanity. These traditions are all-prevalent. They are found under the tent of the Arab, and in the cabins of Alpine shepherds, under the form of verbal and chanted recitals; in cultured

Tradition and reading.

society they chiefly assume the form of reading. Reading levels for us the barriers of space and time, and places at our disposal the collective intellectual treasures of the race. How great the variety of resources which it offers us for nourishing the soul with noble ideas and fortifying sentiments! Study the pages of history, and go below the mere surface of dates and facts; penetrate to the great laws which are revealed in the march of human affairs, and you will see that, on the whole, justice is vindicated. Open books of biography, true biography, books which present men as they really were, without disguising them in false drapery, and you will see the heroes of the good often a butt for persecution and outrage, for the simple reason that the world is in disorder; but you will see them prefer their conscience to all the treasures and pleasures of earth. You will also see great egotists who have immolated every thing to the gratifications of their passions, and who, though possessing wealth and power, and perhaps though seated on the most illustrious thrones of the world, have yet died in disgust with life, and in contempt of themselves.

We can thus derive from reading, (not to mention the books which preserve for us the prescriptions of wisdom, and the maxims of experience,) thoughts and sentiments which will greatly help us. We must not forget, however, that nourishment is transformed into strength, only under the

But reading must be well selected.

double condition of being good in quality and suitable in quantity. If you read books which fall in with your passions, and which will redouble their violence; if you read "those writings which are, so to speak, the sewers of the human mind, and which, despite their flowers, contain only a frightful corruption,"* you cannot escape damage. As to the quantity of intellectual nutriment, these sage cautions were given by Alexander Vinet: "Our century is sick from reading too much, and from reading poorly. Reading, which has been called an *occupied indolence*, and which might be called an *indolent activity*, is the chief occupation of a large number of persons, whose mind, incessantly, but feebly, solicited to a thousand different points, droops like a plant to the surface of the earth, and finally loses all vigor, spontaneity, and independence. Unless there is a reaction of the will of the reader upon the thoughts of the author, reading is often an evil rather than a good. 'It profits not to swallow unless we digest. Woe to him who forgets this! woe to him who is guilty of this voracity, or of indulging this imprudent appetite, which has caused our age to be compared to a boa-constrictor gorged with stained paper, and whose digestion has the look of an agony. Read, but think also; and do not read at all if you are unwilling to think while reading, and after having read." It is

And well digested.

* From Lacordaire.

not only the culture of the intellect that is here in peril, but also the force of the will; for by as much as healthy and well-directed thought is a power for the good, by so much are also indecision, hesitation, and debility of thought, causes of moral weakness.

True ideas and pure sentiments are, thus, abundantly at our disposal for alimenting the soul: but we often have the misfortune of fortifying evil passions by erroneous ideas and guilty sentiments. Instead of healthy nutriment we take poison; or, at least, we follow a very unfortunate moral regimen. This bad regimen debilitates us, and we then complain of a lack of force. But whose is the fault?

These considerations are important, but they do not go to the bottom of our subject. On the supposition of a will directed toward the good, we see well enough how it may be strengthened; but it is this will itself, it is this power facing toward the good, which we lack; our will is debilitated. It seems, therefore, that in appealing to our will in order to strengthen our will, we are revolving in a circle. But this circle is not absolutely vicious, for every one has some degree of will-force, and of sensibility for the good, so that to know the means of augmenting the force which we already have, by giving it a suitable direction, is no little help. However, there remains yet this important phase of the question: Is there any *direct* means of augment-

Is there any direct means of strengthening the will?

ing the power of the will? Does there exist in the life of the soul any primitive phenomenon which is analogous to respiration in the life of the body? This question brings us into the presence of the problem of prayer; a problem which is far-reaching as well as of serious import. The reflections which I am about to present have a general bearing; I confine myself, however, more directly to that which bears on the subject in hand, the inquiry after strength of will. May we demand of God the strength of which we feel we have need? Are we reduced, in the conflict of life, to our own resources, and to the support of our fellows, or may we call to our help the Almighty?

II. Prayer.

Prayer is a universal fact. But in prayer, as in every thing else, we see traces of the essential disorder of humanity. A brigand of Calabria, it is said, will pray the Madonna to assist him in making a lucky stroke; the Chief of a State, when on the point of undertaking a manifestly unjust war, will institute public prayers to beseech God to help in the iniquity: these are instances of the absolute perversion of prayer, so that it becomes prayer for evil. There are persons who, like that frank Greek, Ischomachus, of whom Xenophon has given us a sketch, ask the Divine power for triumph over their enemies, for good repute, for good health,

Prayer universal.

Perverted.

and for all the pleasures of earth. Nevertheless we find also every-where and always, in some degree, true spiritual prayer, prayer which asks strength for the good, of Him who is at once the source of all good and of all strength. This prayer you will find in its essential traits in one of the celebrated choruses of Sophocles; it commences thus: "May it be given to me to observe strict purity in all my actions and words!"* And our own prayer I mean that prayer which we Christians have all been taught in our infancy, what is its purport? What were we taught to pray for? "Our daily bread," in order to remind us who it is that causes the grain to grow in the fields. And what else? That the name of God be hallowed, that is to say, that all men be penetrated more and more with the fundamental truth that the will of God is identical with the good. What else do we pray for? That his will be done, that the good be accomplished, and that we be delivered from evil by pardon and assistance. Such is spiritual prayer in its majestic simplicity; it is prayer for good, and it is of this that we are to speak.

Its true purport.

I ought here to dissipate a fear which some of you may entertain. Do not fear lest I should be about to undertake to penetrate the most secret mysteries of soul-life, and introduce into the delicate functions of the soul the cold and relatively rude instrument of

* *Œdipus Rex.*

reasoning. But doubts are raised as to the value of prayer; I wish to examine these objections, in the hope of destroying them; that is all. I do not propose to demonstrate prayer, but simply, if possible, to give you satisfactory reasons for praying in peace according to the dictates of your heart.

You will hear it said that prayer is a characteristic of the infancy of humanity, and that it is vanishing, little by little, before the light of philosophy, and the results of modern culture. The question is one of fact; but I do not see that the fact alleged is a fact. The instinct of prayer seems to me to be as intense in our day as in the past. Art is so well aware of this that it continually appeals to this instinct. In order to eliminate from the productions of art the idea and sentiment of prayer, it would be necessary to destroy the most beautiful pages, I will not say of Racine, but of Victor Hugo, of Lamartine, of Musset; it would be necessary to efface the finest canvasses in our galleries of painting; it would be necessary to impose silence on the sublimest expressions of music; for it is only on attaining the accents of prayer, that music rises to the loftiest heights of art. Observe that I do not refer here to the personal sentiments of the artists, but to a general sentiment to which they would assuredly not address themselves if this sentiment had disappeared.

The instinct of prayer as intense now as of old.

But is science in contradiction with prayer? If it were so, Kepler, it seems to me, would have surmised it, Newton would have suspected it, and Faraday would not have died, leaving to the learned world the example of a piety equal to his genius.

It does not appear, therefore, on consulting facts, that prayer is disappearing before modern culture, as some affirm.* But the chief objection to prayer is urged in the name of philosophy. It is said that in the eyes of philosophy prayer is irrational. This statement is of serious import; for though we are often obliged to do things contrary to the reasonings of men, we ought never to do any thing contrary to reason in its primitive and true form, such as God placed it in us. But is there, in fact, an incompatibility between philosophy and prayer? In the course of my studies I have made acquaintance with a large number of philosophers, both of the present time and of ages past. I find quite a number of them, and among these the greatest of all, who were pious men, and who prayed as humbly as little children—for there are not two manners of praying. This very day, while turning over a new book, I fell upon an account of the death of a

Not incompatible with philosophy.

* My own conclusion is affirmed in a recent work of M. Juventin, entitled, *États des croyances.* The author says: "All sources of information agree in indicating that, under different tendencies, the number of men of prayer is sensibly increasing." The cool philosophical method of this author gives great weight to his words.

celebrated philosopher and bold innovator, Peter Ramus, who fell a victim of the massacre of St. Bartholomew. When he found himself confronted by the assassins who had just broken in the door of his work-chamber, he begged for a single moment of delay, and pronounced aloud these words of prayer, which have been preserved: "O my God, I have sinned against thee; I have done evil in thy sight. Thy judgments are justice and truth. Have pity on me, and pardon these erring men; they know not what they do." Peter Ramus.

Descartes, a free and mighty spirit if there ever was one, when undergoing the fatal attacks of his last sickness fell into a sort of delirium, which did not, however, disturb the regular connection of his thoughts. Those who heard his last utterances were astonished to hear the geometrician and metaphysician discoursing, not of the sciences which had so much occupied him, but of the greatness of God, and of the misery of man. Descartes.

I have no desire to multiply these examples, and will give but a single one more. There is a philosopher, to the life and works of whom I have devoted long study: Maine de Biran. Maine de Biran arose, as an administrator and statesman, to high political functions; but he was always attracted by an irresistible instinct to the observation of his own mind and to the study of the great Maine de Biran.

problems of human destiny. His great merit in the field of science is this: He observed and recognized, better than any had done before him, the important *rôle* of the will in all the manifestations of human life. He discerned the influence of the will, not only over our acts, but also over our ideas, over our sentiments, and even over our bodily sensations. But at the same time that he determined more and more, by a profound analysis, the power of the will, and what it ought to be in the life of man, he also learned, by a prolonged and often painful experience, the feebleness of the will, and frankly admitted it. By a slow, continued, and long-protracted movement of a mind which, in the midst of uncertainties and waverings, had always been fundamentally directed in one course, he finally turned himself to God, and died a praying man.

There is, therefore, no incompatibility between philosophy and prayer—no more in our own age than in the century of Descartes or in the days of Ramus.

Now, however, when a skeptical doctrine as to prayer has once taken hold upon a mind, does this doctrine succeed in destroying, in the soul of him who professes it, the natural instinct of prayer? No; this also is a question of fact. Never did the philosophy which denies all personal relations between man and God develop itself with more fullness and brilliancy than at the close of the

The instinct of prayer ineradicable by skepticism.

last century. But what was the result? It is said that sailors who profess to be impious enough, cast themselves on their knees as quick as other men when storms threaten them with death. But there are other storms in the world than those of the ocean. At this same epoch, also, great men who had been nurtured on atheism, and who had long professed it openly, discovered anew in their heart, in the midst of the sufferings and convulsions of revolution, the instinct, the need, and the words of prayer.

And here is an analogous fact, which occurred under less sad circumstances. An estimable writer of the same epoch had been imbued with the philosophy of his time and had learned to deny the power of prayer. He had just terminated a work in favor of a cause which he had greatly at heart; he had done all that was in his power to do, and he wrote to one of his correspondents these lines: "It is for God to do the rest; I have prayed him for it with fervor and with tears; a thing which is very unusual for me, and perhaps inconsistent, but my heart was full and it was for me a necessity to pray."

The instinct of prayer, therefore, subsists in spite of the theories which deny it. It is not even necessary in order to be able to pray, to have a positive faith in God. Who are those who can pray? Every body, save those atheists who are certain that God does not exist. But are there any atheists? Are there, I do

not say, theories of atheism, of which there are unfortunately many, but are there men who are perfectly satisfied that God does not exist? We may well doubt this; many fires seem extinct, where live coals still smolder under the ashes. Aside from a supposed real atheism, *all* can attempt to pray, and I see nothing to object to in the reasoning of the poet who, after having exclaimed, "Believe me, prayer is a cry of hope! Let us address God that he may answer us!" seems to hesitate and question whether God exists, and then continues: "But if heaven is empty, we shall offend no one; and if some one hears us, may he have pity upon us!" *

Philosophy in general is not incompatible with prayer; those systems which deny the intercommunion of God and man do not destroy the instinct of prayer, even among their followers; and no doctrine, unless it be atheism properly so called, legitimately interdicts him who feels the need of being strengthened from seeking help of God. There exists, however, in the science of the day, a considerable current which bears souls away from God, a current which has been increased by the

Logical materialism must deny the propriety of prayer.

* Croyez-moi, la prière est un cri d'espérance !
Pour que Dieu nous réponde adressons-nous à lui !
Si le ciel est désert, nous n'offensons personne ;
Si quelqu'un nous entend, qu'il nous prenne en pitié !

ALFRED DE MUSSET.

writings of men who were personally pious, and whose systems of thought did not harmonize with their lives. There is a very extensive phase of philosophy which teaches that prayer is not reasonable, or, in other words, that it is forbidden to the creature who makes use of his reason, to seek the assistance of God. But what is this philosophy? It is that which we have already encountered and characterized; that which denies every element of liberty, and sees in the universe only a totality of phenomena governed by the laws of absolute necessity. If, in fact, every thing is determined necessarily—if there is no principle of liberty in the world—there is, then, nothing to pray for. The inference is just; but when I add, There is nothing to be done, the inference is equally just. The doctrine which denies the efficaciousness of prayer, denies equally also the efficaciousness of the efforts of man in labor. This is the sole argument which I propose to develop. It is objected to the idea of prayer that every thing is fatally determined; I shall try to show that, if the objection is valid, it is also valid against labor.

But it must also deny the efficaciousness of labor.

Do you believe in the reality of human power in labor? What is the character of the action of man on nature? We fertilize the soil, shut in rivers by dikes, improve the species of vegetables and animals; or, acting in another direction, we exhaust the soil by imprudent culture,

we strip the mountains of trees, so that the unrestrained water inundate our valleys, and we deteriorate the animal and vegetable species. But our action on nature is quite limited: most certainly we could not cause our planet to deviate from its orbit; an earthquake annihilates the work of entire generations; still, our power over nature, though limited, is real. What are its precise limits? No one can tell. It is not likely, however, that, realizing the dream of a modern Utopian, humanity will ever succeed in changing the ocean into a basin of lemonade; but while good sense laughs at the dreams of fools, genius has often surpassed, and will often yet surpass, the dreams of lunatics. We exert, in fact, an undeniable influence on nature; do we not also on society? Do we not act on our fellows by words and by looks? Could we arrest an engineer who purposes raising a dam, or a gardener who is trying to ameliorate his products, or a mother who is trying to incline the heart of her child to be good, or the politician who is attempting to bring about a reform in society, by saying to them: What are you about? do you not know that every thing is absolutely and fatally determined? No; in the matter of appreciating human power, our age leans rather to the side of presumption than to that of discouragement. But what is the object of all those who labor, whether in the domain of matter or of mind? They are in the

Common sense never accepts fatalism.

presence of an order of things which they are attempting to modify; they do not think, therefore, that every thing in the universe is fatally determined.

You see the drift of my argument; and you think, perhaps, that I am venturing upon a sophistical undertaking. You admit that man can exert an influence on nature and on society; but you suppose that the action of God is fixed and immutable, and that, consequently, an argument based on the efficaciousness of human action could not lead to the admission of the efficaciousness of prayer, since prayer presumes to modify the action of God. The objection is based on the assumption of an absolute distinction and separation between the action of man and the action of God. But this assumption is erroneous, as I think I can readily make clear.

Divine action co-operates with that of man, not only in prayer, but also elsewhere.

What is it that man does when he acts on nature? This action consists, as Lord Bacon remarks, in separating or in uniting portions of matter. But in what more than this? Nothing. In all his works, from the fabrication of the most diminutive watch to the construction of the grandest cathedral, man never does any thing more than to bring together, or separate, portions of matter; whatever else is done takes place independently of him, and almost always by means which he does not understand. For example, you elevate water in the tube of a pump, and you say that your effort has raised the water. This is true,

but under what condition? Under condition of all the natural laws of water; under condition of the attraction of the earth and the weight of the atmosphere. When you elevate water in a pump, heaven and earth co-operate with you; all the powers of nature consent to undergo, on a given point, and contrary to the natural course of things, the influence of your will. And even should you raise the water simply with your hand, the fact would remain the same; for, in obedience to a decision of your will, all the forces of nature have been active, in the interior of your body, in transmitting this decision to your hand, and from your hand to the water which it has raised. That philosophy which establishes an absolute distinction between the work of man and the work of God, is, therefore, a philosophy without depth.

It supposes, contrary to fact, that man can accomplish work without the concurrence of the forces of nature, which are but an expression of the will of the Creator. The natural course of things which, in fact, is the direct working of God, is, therefore, incessantly modified by the labor of man. But shall we say, now, that by our work the designs of God are changed? No; for God, in creating us free, made us partakers of his power, and designs us to be *laborers together with Him;* to labor is not, therefore, to change his designs, but to accomplish them. Man is conscious within himself of the power of acting; he acts; he sees and

knows the results of his acts, and takes little account of those theorists who affirm that every thing is determined by necessity.

The results of labor are manifest.

The question which here presents itself, now, is: Is prayer a power? Have we the privilege of deriving strength from the source of strength, of seeking it of God? We have the instinct of prayer as well as that of action, and God who made us actors made us equally *pray-ers*. But there are so many men who do not pray! you say. And I answer: There are so many men who do not work; or, what amounts to the same thing, who work only under the iron rod of necessity! As the fact that there are idlers is no proof that man is not constituted for labor, so the fact that there are some lips always closed before God, is no proof that man is not constituted for prayer.

We have the instinct of prayer, but can we verify its results? Without doubt. Here is a man in prey to some severe temptation. Feeling himself on the point of falling, he cries to God and is sustained. You say, perhaps, that he is a man of strong will, and that the result would have been the same even had he not prayed. But are you quite sure of this? Take another case: an epidemic has broken out in a city. The physicians and civil officers perform their duties, the special duties of their profession. But here are men and women who, without being obligated by any special office, without

The results of prayer are likewise manifest.

seeking renown, without having at heart the interests of science, without hoping for crosses of honor, or other reward, consecrate themselves with unfaltering devotion to the alleviation of the public distress; and they are praying persons. Perhaps you will say: They are generous natures, and, even had they not prayed, their conduct would have been the same. But are you quite sure of this? These persons affirm that they found strength in prayer; the fact transpired within their souls. What right have you to deny it?

To labor is not to change the plans of God: it is to accomplish them, since God made us for labor. Prayer does not presume to change the plans of God: it simply accomplishes them, since God constituted us with the need and instinct of prayer.

The objections to prayer vanish as soon as we admit the liberty of God.

Prayer and labor are liable to the same objections; but these objections are based on the assumption that there is liberty neither in man nor in God, that the universe is a fixed and fatal mechanism. From this point of view, which is that of open or disguised atheism, there is, in fact, nothing to be prayed for; but, likewise, there is nothing to be done. The doctrine of universal fatalism is so contrary to our immediate sense of reality, and to the common consciousness of the human race, that we have a good right to ask of it proofs of its truth. Now, these proofs have never been given, nor are they ever likely to be.

Labor and prayer have many points of resemblance; they coincide in presuming on the co-operation of God with man. The contrast has been made in more than one modern writer, that prayer was the practice of ancient times, while labor is the virtue of the modern world. I am not sure, however, that the ancients prayed much more than we; and I am of opinion that we do not labor much more than they. As to instituting a contrast between prayer and labor, there is no just foundation for it, though it is often suggested to the mind by the abuses of a morbid piety. The prayer that would presume to take the place of labor would be a mockery, and almost a crime. You know very well the fable of La Fontaine: *The Rat which has Retired from the World.* The big fat rat, superabundantly supplied with Dutch cheese, is applied to for help by a delegation of his compatriots of Ratopolis, who were blockaded by the cat-nation. "They had been compelled to start on their mission without money because of the needy condition of the assaulted city. They asked very little, confident that succor would soon be at hand. 'My friends,' said the hermit, 'the things of this world concern me no longer; wherewith can a poor recluse be of help to you? What can he do but pray that heaven may come to your aid? I hope, in fact, that heaven may preserve you.' Having spoken thus, the new saint turned and shut his door."

Labor and prayer form no proper antagonism.

This is a saint of the bad type. The invalid who has neither gold, nor silver, nor strength, nor even speech, may yet give his prayers, and woe to him who would disdain the gift! But for him who is able to act, to say to his fellows: "Brothers, I prefer not to trouble my repose in order to do you a service, but I will pray that God may come to your help," is manifestly to mock, at once, both man and God. Prayer, true prayer, ought to be the source, the main-spring, of our action for the good. To those who say, Act, instead of praying! we should always be able to answer, I pray in order to have strength for acting.

These two harmonizing activities, labor and prayer, have the same condition, and the same limitation. The condition of both is perseverance. On this point we often commit an error which occasions many discouragements. We reason, and we act, as if every prayer were to be immediately and fully answered; as if every thing should be accomplished on our simply once asking it of God. This is the error of an impatient child that should want a work to be finished as soon as it is commenced. If prayer is a natural function of spiritual life, it is from that very fact a perpetual function. If prayer is the respiration of the soul, it ought to be incessantly renewed. Without presuming to limit the power of divine grace, we yet have no right, for example, to expect, in the ordinary course of Provi-

The condition of labor and of prayer.

dence, that a single prayer addressed to the Master of life should emancipate the will from the fetters of evil habits which have been strengthening themselves for a period of ten, twenty, or, perhaps, thirty years. Perseverance, therefore, is the common condition of both labor and prayer. As to the limits of these two powers, they are involved in the inscrutable designs of Providence. How many prayers receive no apparent and immediate answer! How many of our efforts seem to fail of their end! Sovereign wisdom reserves the privilege of fixing definitively both the success of our efforts and the results of our prayers.

The effects of both labor and prayer limited by the wisdom of God.

We have, therefore, found the direct source of strength, of that strength which, when once obtained, we are to nurture and increase by a good spiritual regimen. But is that all? One of you has written to me, and asked, what others of you have, doubtless, also thought: Are we not going to speak directly of that help which is to be found in Christian faith, in faith properly so called? Is there not a power in believing in God as revealed in Jesus Christ? This question is grave; shall we enter upon it? We shall enter upon it, and that, too, without in the least transgressing the philosophical limits which we have laid down for our inquiries.

The question of faith in Christ.

III. The Question of Faith.

By the nature of this discussion, as defined from the start, it was to be a *philosophical* examination of the problem of evil. That is, we were to enter upon it without any other condition than that of serious and earnest minds in search of the truth. We are not presumed, while here, to have any common bond of faith, or to have consented to any one form of dogmas. Under all the diversities, shades, and transitions which real life offers, and which over-step our abstract divisions, society forms, on the whole, two distinct classes. The ones make profession of the Christian faith; that is to say, they accept the supernatural testimony of Christ, and, if they are consistent, submit to his authority wherever it may conduct them. The others have not accepted this authority, and can be addressed only in their quality of men, with reason, heart, and conscience. Thus far I have addressed all without discrimination. But now I must distinguish.

As to Christians.

As to us who are Christians, at least in profession, what is our position on the question which we are investigating? We affirm that it is only by faith in the Crucified One of Golgotha, and by participation in the grace which flows from this source of mercy, that the soul can find, through prayer, the strength necessary for working that

change, that conversion, which extricates it from the pursuits of egotism, and causes it to enter into the paths of charity. Those of you who are believers, to whatever degree it may be, your faith is your treasure. But this treasure is not like that of the miser; he who possesses it ought to spread it, for it grows intense within us in proportion as it is propagated to others by us. You have, therefore, to bear testimony of your faith. You are to call the attention of men to the source of the strength that is in you, by the instrumentality of your works and your sentiments, that is to say, by being virtuous and joyous; for all true faith is a fountain of goodness and joy. You are, then, to add words to example, and propagate your convictions by argument. Take care, however, not to wound legitimate sentiments. Do not, by your imprudence, increase the difficulties which the truth otherwise meets with in conquering hearts. In addressing those who profess the same faith as yourselves, remind them frankly of the rule of authority to which you, as well as they, submit. But when you are to give a reason for your faith to those who are simply your fellows, without being believers, do not forget that they *are* your fellows, that is to say, that they, like you, have a will that belongs to God, but which, in the presence of men, is master of itself. Respect in all things the liberty of others; and, to say it all in one word, if you wish to serve efficiently

the cause of Christian faith, *propose* it, but do not *impose* it.

As to non-Christians.

For those, however, who make no profession of being Christians, and who are here simply to investigate a philosophical question, the testimony of believers is a fact which is evident before you, and of which you are called to estimate the value. You could not neglect this without violating the conditions of honest investigation. Philosophy, in fact, is a pursuit which is entirely free, that is to say, which is limited by no dogmatic assumption; it is an inquiry, whose object is universal; strictly speaking, it differs from the special sciences simply by the universality of its object. Liberty and universality: these are the two characteristics of philosophy. In your search after a solution of the problems of humanity, you encounter the testimony of Christians, occupying a large place in history. What is to be thought of the fact upon which their faith is based? This question cannot be evaded; are you forbidden to examine it? If so, your inquiries are not free. But is this question foreign to you? No; for by their very nature, your inquiries are universal. In either case, you would violate the conditions of philosophy. It is necessary, therefore, in an honest and truly free investigation, to propose directly the question of faith; that is to say, the question of the nature of the testimony of Jesus Christ. To avoid proposing

it on the pretense that it is already solved in the negative, would be to act under the influence of a prejudice; and this prejudice would constitute a dogmatic pre-supposition, which, for being contrary to that of believers, would none the less be contrary to philosophical procedure.

The two possible answers.

The question, when once proposed, is capable of two solutions. Is the testimony of Christ a divine testimony establishing a legitimate authority? If, after examination, you answer negatively, then you will seek some other basis than that of faith upon which to construct your theory of life. But if, after examination, you answer affirmatively, then, by that very fact, you enter into the very sphere of faith.

The negative.

If you have said "No," then either your search will continue without coming to any result, or you will come to be a Positivist, a Hegelian, a Deist, a Pantheist, or you will construct a theory of your own. You will have a philosophy of some kind; this philosophy may be even Christian in a certain degree, in that you may accept a portion of the Christian system; but the doctrines which you may thus accept will remain for you simply doctrines, resting on no basis of faith. It is thus that the majority of contemporary French philosophers of the so-called Spiritualistic school, have introduced into their system many elements, whose historical source is manifestly Christian. And it is thus that

I have proposed to you a philosophical solution of the problem of evil, taken from the sphere of theology, but which we have separated therefrom, and which may be accepted, if it is thought to answer well its purpose, without accepting, as a whole, the Christian system. However this may be, if you have given a negative answer to the question of faith, you will still remain in the common domain of philosophy, properly so-called.

The affirmative.

But if you have answered affirmatively, if you have accepted the testimony of Christ as divine, the faith which therefore ensues will be the starting-point of a new process of thought, for, as St. Anselm has said, faith seeks to justify itself. Taking the Christian doctrines as a basis, you will proceed to organize a speculative or practical theory of life. If you are a theologian, you will construct a system of theology. But if you are not, if you are simply a member of society, desiring to be able to give a reason for your faith, you will adopt what may be called a Christian's philosophy; the word Christian preventing all misunderstanding, and giving clearly to understand that you stand no longer on the ground of mere philosophy in general, but within the pale of faith. Where once the divine testimony is accepted, there the inquiry after the basis of truth ceases, like a ship casting anchor on entering a harbor; and the efforts of thought assume another phase. Though

philosophy proper ceases within the pale of faith, but continues, if faith has been rejected after rational examination, yet, strictly speaking, in all cases where skepticism as to faith exists *before* such examination, and hence can only be the result of prejudice, we cannot admit that philosophy proper, which by nature is impartial and absolutely free, has either ceased or yet continues, for it, in fact, has never commenced.

Is it not perfectly evident that a mind truly honest and free could not pass over a fact as important as the power of Christianity in the world without subjecting it to the most careful examination? Many men, however, I mean men of science, have never made this examination—have never thought of seriously proposing the question of faith. But why is this? The fact depends partly on historical causes, into the details of which I cannot here enter. I will, however, indicate one: the abuse of authority, and the interference of civil powers in the domain of faith. At the time when heresy, as detected by ecclesiastical authority, involved severe temporal consequences, those men who wished to enjoy independence of thought, and yet had no taste for martyrdom, thought of no better stratagem than to declare that, absorbed in the researches of philosophy, they kept themselves entirely outside of the religious sphere, and meddled themselves not in the least with the verities of faith. It was under

Many thinkers of the day ignore Christianity.

And why?

these circumstances that sprang up the strange notion that there could be two realms of truth, to the one of which men might belong as philosophers, and to the other as believers. It was under such a state of things that the Italian Pomponazzi, while writing a book against the immortality of the soul, nevertheless affirmed that, in his quality of Catholic, he fully accepted the doctrine of a future life, as viewed from the stand-point of faith. The abuse of authority produced, as a natural consequence, an unwillingness to examine the grounds of faith. And one of the causes which still yet hinder the propagation of the Christian religion is the fact, that many men are deterred from examining such questions by a vague and unnatural trepidation which is a heritage of the servitude of the past. But the epoch of liberty has now fully arrived. And as it is contrary to all reason to admit that one truth can conflict with another, it is very evident that true liberty of mind, and independence of spirit, cannot exist in that man who does not break through the cloud of prejudices, and honestly contemplate, along with other problems, that pre-eminently great problem which is involved in the origin and revolutionizing power of Christianity. But what is here my more immediate object? Simply to show you how that the question of faith, that question which is of such manifold and deep bearing, rises naturally and inevitably from the discussion in

which we are engaged, and demands of us a positive answer, one way or the other.

The good has a history. It has had its struggles, its reverses, and its triumphs. Now, in the history of the good, there is one name which, as no one really denies, occupies an altogether exceptional pre-eminence—Jesus of Nazareth. Moral truth, it is true, had been largely developed in the ancient world, by the patient labors of sages in studying the voice of conscience, and in observing the laws of spiritual life. But at the same time that moral light was dawning more clearly, public morals were degenerating: the civilization of the Roman world was characterized by a frightful mingling of debauchery and cruelty. There seemed to be a profound divorce between the conscience and the life of humanity; and the more clearly the sages discovered the ideal of good, the more did they feel their inability to realize it in the world.

Christianity saved the civilized world from moral ruin.

It was then that the teachings of the Galilean were heard, teachings which were the starting-point of regeneration in a world which was sinking into the abysses of corruption. If there were need of it, I could refer you for confirmation of this remark to a recent work which will not be suspected of partiality to Christianity, the History of Moral Ideas in Antiquity, by M. Denis. M. Denis seems to design positively to deny the reality of a supernatural mani-

festation in Jesus Christ. He collects a multitude of texts, designed to show that moral light had constantly increased through the researches of ancient philosophy. And he proves it; but he is forced to admit, at the same time, that the depravity of morals increased in proportion as the sages saw more distinctly and clearly the true laws of human nature; and he acknowledges that the power, the strength, which has begun to realize the moral law in society, did not spring directly from the labors of philosophers, but, on the contrary, from the preaching of Christianity. And we see not how any one who is acquainted with the facts can think otherwise than M. Denis. We say, then, that it was the teaching of Christ which gave birth to that progress which characterizes and constitutes modern civilization; those even who do not admit the divinity of the Gospel are often forced to admit this as a historical fact. To accept this fact is equivalent to admitting that the world is in progress.

It was not light that was wanting, but moral strength.

Permit me here, as bearing on this point, to introduce a piece of personal experience. I know that it is a good rule to speak as little as possible of one's self; but you know also that when men are engaged in an interchange of thought, the recital of an experience made by one of them is often of great interest. Here, then, is what has occurred to me in regard to the idea of progress.

Every man, perhaps, whether because of circumstances attending his advent into the world, or because of his own peculiar temperament, is naturally inclined to look with especial preference, either in the direction of the past, or in that of the future. Personally, I have always had a predominant taste for the past, whether because of the general circumstances which I have just mentioned, or perhaps because, not being insensible to poetry, I found more pleasure in the rural scenes and landscapes as they existed in the days of our fathers, in the roads winding along between hedges and following the meanderings of our native brooks, than in the best constructed of our railroads, or in the straightest lines of telegraphic posts; or, finally, perhaps because, in the political changes which Europe has presented since the time of my youth, I have not been able to entertain a sentiment of respect for those men who are ever ready to welcome every thing that is novel, taking care, at the same time, to secure for themselves as good a place as possible in the new order of things—for those men who turn the back to every setting sun, and adore every rising star, and who are ready to applaud to-day, after its success, that which they blamed yesterday while uncertain of the result. By reason of all these causes, I was disposed to look with suspicion upon all innovation, and to believe very little in progress. But in the year 1854 I was called to

Personal experience of the author.

lecture, in Geneva, on the subject of the influence of Christianity on the destiny of society. This required me to embrace under one point of view the entire development of the history of the last eighteen centuries. I became convinced that every innovation is not progress; that in the march of civilization there are halts, returns backward, darkenings of the public conscience, and debilitated states of public opinion; but that, notwithstanding this, if we fix our eye on the great movements and grand outlines, we discover a uniform and progressive growth, both legislatively and practically, of dignity, justice, and benevolence. I saw that, even as the waters of all streams flow into the abysses of the ocean, so the current of humanity, though often eddying backward, yet, on the whole, constantly rises toward the heavens. From that time forth, while unwilling to welcome every innovation, or to renounce my inalienable right of exposing hurtful innovations, and protesting against unjust triumphs, I have believed, seriously believed, in progress; and this impression has never been shaken. I was conquered by the truth.

True progress a birth of Christianity.

But whence springs true progress? I have already explained it. The soil of humanity was prepared by the labor of the conscience, and the reflections of sages; but ancient wisdom found the light without discovering the power. It did not succeed in furnishing the human race with a

lasting principle of life. The germ of effectual moral power was deposited in the soil by the words of Christ. From that time on, the tree of good has been growing. It may at times become covered with moss, with fungus, and with dead branches; but the sap of eternal youth circulates in its members. To those who have seen, in vision, the proportions to which it is destined, the tree appears as yet scarcely started in its career of expansion; and those who despise its shade resemble men who should disdain the secular oak which shaded their fathers, and which might generously overhang generations to come, and plant for themselves shriveled acorns in arid sands.

We have in us two instincts: love of the past and love of the future; and these two instincts are equally true. Without indulging in illusions, without expecting from earthly progress that which the earth can never realize; without losing sight of the shocks, the tempests, the catastrophes, which may fall upon the champions of religion, and which, perhaps, are not far distant, it must be admitted that human society tends, constantly and progressively, to present a less imperfect reflection of the kingdom of the good. But the future grows out of the past; progress is but the development of the pure germs deposited in the traditions of the race. Our love of that which was, and our desire of the new, are harmonized by our fidelity to this tradition, as main-

Conservatism and radicalism reconciled.

tained and purified by trial, and as the more surely maintained by being more perfectly purified. The division of mankind into two camps, of which the one aims to preserve all that is, and the other to destroy all that thus far has been—the division, which is observable no less in the quarrels of a village than in the diplomacy of empires, no less in the conversation of two individuals than in the greatest conflicts in the world of ideas—is entirely unnecessary and unjustifiable. That there should be a contest between two exclusive parties is perhaps natural to our evil hearts; for it is the contest of interest and passion. But have you not caught sight of the day-dawn of better times, as often as personal interest and passion were lost sight of? Innovators, would you, then, destroy the good of the past and renounce the heritage of centuries? Conservatists, would you, in your turn, arrest the work of the present, and hinder the good from growing for the future? There is a better course; between the banners of these two hostile factions there exists a third, that of the men who, by the labor of the present, are striving to prepare a better future by the development of the good that was in the past, and by the progressive elimination of the evil. This is the party of peace, of justice, and of truth. In its hands is the future, that future which we hail with confident hope. Cast your eyes about you, now, and say whether this progress toward the good is not an

outgrowth of the past; say whether that which constitutes the solidity and glory of our civilization is not the development of Christian thought; say whether the increasing harmony of individuals and nations under just and beneficent law is not the work of Him who manifested his glory on high by announcing peace and good-will among men?

The unparalelled influence of Christ on civilization.

Jesus of Nazareth appears in history as the source of the greatest of all developments of social good among mankind. This is assuredly a unique fact, and worthy of the most serious consideration. It seems surprising that the germ of universal progress was deposited in the soil of humanity, not by the schools of Greece, nor by the practical wisdom of Rome, but by a citizen of Nazareth in Galilee. But let us not simply consider the social influence of the Son of Mary; look also at his influence on individuals. Alfred de Musset, a victim of passions of which, even while yielding to them, he never ceased to recognize the fatal character, stopped thoughtfully one day in the presence of the grand figure of St. Augustine, and seeing how this ardent son of Africa rose to full triumph over passions which were ruining him, he wrote this line, which is not among the feebler tributes which the world has rendered to the Bishop of Hippo: "The most manly man that ever existed, St. Augustine!" But whence did St. Augustine obtain power to tri-

On illustrious men.

umph over his passions? He himself has told us so clearly that all the world knows it. And shall we again refer to Pascal? Pascal was of such feeble health that from the age of nineteen he never passed a single day without suffering in his body. And in this ailing body there was lodged a soul so bold, so proud, so ready to descend into the deepest depths of thought, that he was also acquainted with all the torments of the understanding. But it was Pascal who, while speaking of the condition of his own soul, exclaimed: "Joy, joy, joy! and weepings for joy!" And whence came to him the power of triumphing over suffering? He himself has written it, in words which will not be effaced. But why linger about these illustrious names? The Christian faith, it is true, acts too little for the good; and this is the fault and shame of those who profess it; but it nevertheless acts. Consider what is taking place in the world, far and near. How many temptations conquered! how many lives changed! how much sacrifice! how many tears wiped away! how many rays of hope, beaming even into the anguish and darkness of death! how much fortitude—fortitude against suffering, against sadness, against disgust and temptation! in a word, how much strength for the good has been produced and is yet every day produced by this single name Jesus!

On the humblest.

Suppress this name if you can! If you could efface

it from the memories of men, what gloom would cover the earth, what thick clouds would vail our sun! clouds more dark than those which brooded over the chaos of the ancient world, because the shadows which follow after light are more dense than the darkness which precedes it. Every serious conviction has its rights, and should be respected. If a man, after having considered and reconsidered his thoughts, is well convinced that the Christian faith in itself, and independently of its abuses, is hurtful, he has the right, and not only the right, but the duty, of working for the destruction of what, in his eyes, is a baneful superstition. But (and I say it not only in the name of my personal convictions, but also in the name of the most evident interests of humanity, in the name of untold weaknesses sustained, and sufferings consoled), how culpable would be overhaste in this matter! how criminal would it be to trifle! how confirmed should one be in his convictions, and certain in his negations, before being able with good conscience to devote his words and pen to banishing faith from the earth!

But, it may occur to some of you, are we only going to consider one phase of the question? are we not going to supplement our survey of the benefits of the Christian faith, by an examination of the evils with which it has been accused? We have no desire to leave in the background this phase of the subject. But what are the accusations

But has not Christianity caused much evil?

made? That under pretext of religion, men seek riches, power, and earthly interests. That in the name of religion, constraint, oppression, and despotism have been so much practiced as to throw the friends of liberty almost inevitably into the party hostile to faith. In a word, it is complained that religion is often only a cloak to cover the base purposes of sensuality and pride. But is this a fact? It is a fact, and undeniably so. But why is this? Shall we impute it to the Christian faith *per se?* Do you suppose that the Brahmins of India and the priests of Mongolia never seek, under pretext of religion, the satisfaction of unspiritual interests? Or do you pretend that it is not simply the Christian religion, but religion in general, that produces these sad results? If so, then I ask: Do you suppose that all professions of patriotism are perfectly pure, and that private interests never lurk behind the broad mantle of the public good? You cannot think so; for there are few so little acquainted with the world as not to know, that if faith has its hypocrites, politics and philanthropy have also their quacks and Tartuffes. There have been dreadful persecutions; but would you charge upon the Christian faith the orders of the Roman emperors, in their efforts to quench in blood the infant Church? In India the blood of the followers of Buddha has been freely shed; but is that the fault of the Christian faith? Nor, to leave out of the account Christianity, can we fix upon

religion in general a blacker stigma than upon other manifestations of social life? The interest of monarchs, and the passions of nations, have created in the past, and still yet create, untold suffering and unnumbered martyrs. The proscriptions of Sylla were not of a religious origin; and the bloody excesses of the French Revolution cannot be charged to religion. Is it not clear that the world is full of passions which, springing from man's evil heart, defile every thing with their contact? To charge religion with the evils which have resulted from its perversion, is to take the innocent pretext for the guilty cause. If passions have run especially high under religious pretexts, it is simply because of the great importance of the subject of religion in general. But when social interests predominate, the passions of men run to equal extremes in this respect. Hypocrisy and persecution are not uncommon in the sphere of politics, as all of you have already seen, and will doubtless see again. But let us meet the question squarely and directly.

As pretext but not as cause.

Is Jesus of Nazareth responsible for the evil that has been done in his name? Did he, for example, commend the seeking of the riches and power of earth, under pretext of heaven? You know very well that fanaticism showed itself under his own eyes, and in the person of his own disciples. What did he say to those who wished to call down fire from heaven to

Christ the first to protest against the abuse of his truth.

consume an inhospitable village? "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." And what to him who wished to draw the sword in his defense? "Put up again thy sword in its place." And what to those who supposed him interested in earthly glory? "My kingdom is not of this world." Jesus has had his imitators, and he has them still. For three centuries his Church saw no other blood flow than that of its unjustly persecuted members, and had no other connection with prisons than to see its innocent members cruelly shut up therein. For eighteen centuries there have been, and there are yet, men who have sincerely sought the good of their souls, and renounced the pursuits of selfishness. Now, I ask you, you who complain of the evils produced by religion: Are such persons the real Christians, or is it the other class of merely professed Christians? Jesus himself foresaw, and condemned in advance, all the abuses that have ever been made of his word. No single protest of a noble heart, or a generous conscience, against an unworthy use which has been made of religion, fails to find in the words of Christ direct approbation and sanction. Earth has had its impure religions; there have been pious debauches and holy cruelties; vice, armed with divine sanction, descended to earth from Olympus, and the conscience of Socrates was purer than the sanctuary of the gods. But in the Christian world,

that which is made an occasion for abuses, will always remain a living principle of protestation against these very abuses. Whenever, in the Christian world, deplorable instances of hypocrisy or fanaticism come to light, as they constantly do come to light, we can always appeal from the temple to the God who is there adored, and from the priest to Him of whom he claims to be the minister and servant. The Christian records are an ever-flowing spring, fertilizing the soil of humanity. But the waters of this spring, in flowing through the corrupt heart of humanity, become mingled with impurity and uncleanness. But what of this? Turn your eyes to their primitive fountain, and behold how it still flows, perennially crystalline and pure. Impute not, therefore, to it the slime and impurity which become mingled with it, and which it sweeps away and purifies. Jesus, I repeat it, is the greatest of all actors, an actor with whom no other can even be compared, in the contest against evil. There presents itself, therefore, to every earnest and impartial mind, this question: Who was this man, the position of whom in the history of moral development is so unique and exceptional?

The question in its essential form.

I state this question, but do not discuss it; this would lead us outside of our programme; and it merits to be treated apart. Moreover, we have reached the close of this series of discourses.

Before opening this discussion, I received from abroad a letter dictated by an artist's taste, and occasioned by the nature of the subject I had undertaken to discuss. I was asked whether the contemplation of the beautiful and the good would not be more salutary, and whether it were not dangerous to consider too attentively the evil. I answer: It is not well to look long at evil; and we should hasten to turn away our eyes, if we feel ourselves feeble in its presence, and have reason to fear that, instead of combating it, we may yield to its solicitations. But evil is so intimately inwoven with our life that we see it without needing to look for it; and I think with Pascal, that "It is well to accustom ourselves to profit by evil, inasmuch as it is so generally prevalent, whereas the good is so rare." I trust that we, too, will not separate without having derived some profit from this review of the nature of evil.

Let us sum up the principal points involved in the discussion which we are now closing:

Résumé. The good is that which ought to be; it is the will of God. The realizing of the good has been committed to free creatures; where freedom should be lacking there could be neither good nor evil. From the existence of free creatures, results the possibility of revolt and its consequences. A revolt has actually taken place; the human race violated its law by a voluntary act, and we are subject to the con-

sequences of the common fall. But the good is the cause of Him who is almighty; and time will not fail the Almighty for accomplishing his purposes. The source of our discouragements is often in our impatience; we would measure by our short reed the ways of Him who is patient because he is eternal.

The evil ought not to be; God wishes it not to be. To name it is to proclaim at once the duty of combating it, and the bright hope of triumphing over it. For him who, admitting the authority of reason and the validity of conscience, preserves an unshaken faith in the goodness of the Author of the universe, the good beams brightly forth, even from the contemplation of evil, and all complaints and sighs of discouragement are finally transformed into an anthem of hope.

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RELIGION AND THE REIGN OF TERROR.

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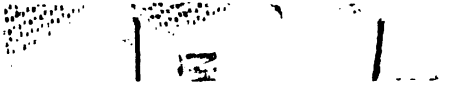

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